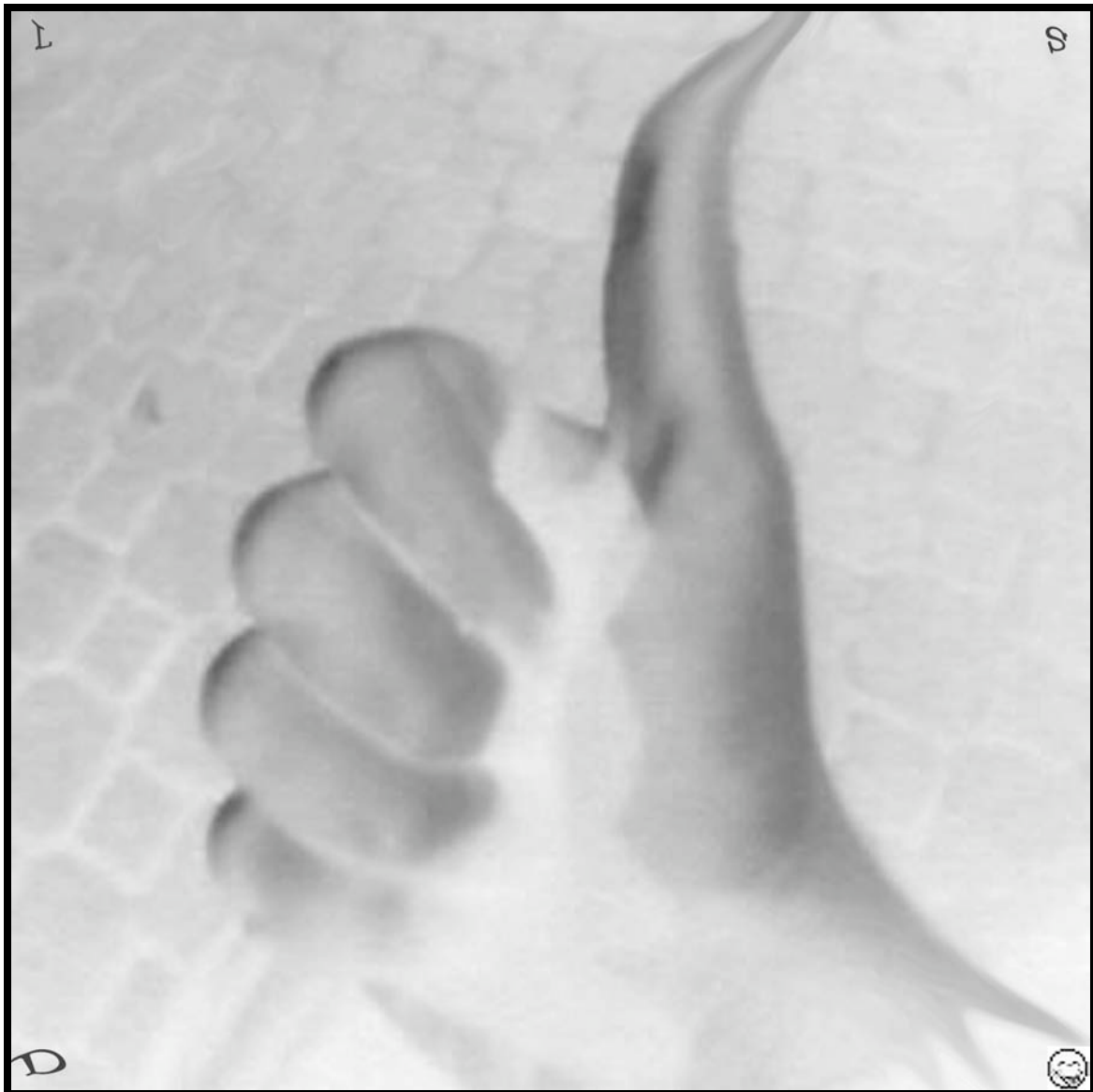


Cenacle

Number 50 • December 2003



Electric Thumb . . . Groovy!



“Well, here we are, Mr. Pilgrim,
trapped in the amber of this moment.
There is no why.”

—Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
Slaughterhouse-Five, 1969.

FROM SOULARD'S NOTEBOOKS

November 13, 2003
7:18 a.m.
Papa's Restaurant
Hartford, CT.

Dearest Kassidawn,

This morning I determined not to eat at Burger King - they serve no decent food there & what they do have is the kind of gross unhealthful stuff you & I are determined to avoid -

So I got off the bus near the Municipal Cafeteria - a place I told you I went years ago - it's open - but no longer for breakfast - too bad -

There wasn't much else - the few possibilities were all closed - I was walking to the train station, having given up, when I noticed Papa's Restaurant across ~~the~~ ^{from} the street from the train station - open for breakfast - joy - not Burger King crap -

This place has been here forever - it looks like a pizza joint w/ its many booths, hanging plants, walls covered in faded pictures of Greek - or Italian - looking rustic scenes - but it's more like one of those cafeterias I told you about -

A large round mirror clock - above

its counter at the back a large handwritten menu with many specials - trays of pastries & a lit case of desserts - ^{the speakers}

AM newsradio on local cops drinking coffee & reading the morning paper - not too crowded but not empty & depressing - ^{the lady running the place bustles & snits}

I ordered - joy of joy cereal for breakfast - a little box of Raisin Bran & with it a round white bowl & ^{metal} spoon, & a little paper coffee cup of milk - buck & a half - & I had a can of diet Coke from my bag -

It's good I held out for a place like this - health involves decisions - & revisions of habit - if it's going to work, this project of ours, it will involve making efforts - like this morning's -

I was going to mention this ^{morning} to you more casually but then it seemed too much like I'd done especially well - so I guess I wanted to say: 😊. Untwisting my bad health habits of a lifetime is taking effort but at times it feels utterly right - & the rewards when they come are sweet -

I hope this letter finds you ^{having} a good day - & I hope one day I discover you sitting here with me.

Love,
Raymond

Cenacle

Number 50 • December 2003

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Why I Turned Back from D.C. by Raymond Souland, Jr. [79]	1
50 Lies I Told by George W. Bush	5
6 x 36 Nocturnes (Sixth Series) by Raymond Souland, Jr. [79]	7
North Carolina Sketchbook by Barbara Brannon	23
Secret Joy Amongst These Times by Raymond Souland Jr. [79]	27
Poetry by Judih Haggai	39
New Period [a new fixtion] by Raymond Souland, Jr. [79]	45
The Politics of Consciousness by Jay Stevens	67
Notes on Contributors	80

Front cover & back cover designs by Raymond Soulard, Jr.
Cenacle logo based on design by Barbara Brannon.

Accompanying cassette features highlights from the October 27, 2001 Jellicle Literary Guild meeting held at Jim Burke III's home in West Hartford, Connecticut, & the December 1, 2001 Jellicle Literary Guild meeting held at Mark Shorette's home in Plainville, Connecticut.

The Cenacle, 20 Milford Street, Plainville, Connecticut, is published six times a year by Scriptor Press. It is kin organ to *ElectroLounge* website (<http://www.geocities.com/scriptorpress>), RaiBooks, Burning Man Books, *Scriptor Press Sampler*, & "Within's Within: Scenes from the Psychedelic Revolution w/Soulard," broadcast online worldwide weekends on SpiritPlants Radio (<http://yage.net:9000>). All rights of works published herein belong exclusively to the creator of the work.

Thank you to Kassandra Kramer . . . you helped me re-invent damaged things still needed, and release what was not . . .

PATRIOTISM
MEANS
NO QUESTIONS

A MESSAGE FROM
THE MINISTRY OF
HOMELAND SECURITY

RAYMOND SOULARD, JR.



Why I Turned Back From D.C.

On Saturday, October 25, 2003, tens of thousands of people in the U.S., joined by delegations from countries around the world, went back into the streets to demand an end to the American occupation of Iraq . . .

I was walking to Union Station in New Haven to begin my trip to the demonstrations in Washington, D.C. I'd made my arrangements to get down there and back, via Amtrak and Greyhound. All was set. So what was feeling so seriously wrong?

By the time I got off the phone ranting to my girlfriend about it, I knew I wasn't going to D.C., and why.

I realized that, while I deeply oppose the Iraq war, I equally damn the anemic and simple-minded turn that the antiwar movement has taken since the American invasion.

I didn't go to the D.C. demonstrations, because I don't believe that withdrawal from that decimated country is the best course. Neither, of course, is continued occupation and likely exploitation. Iraq deserves to be rebuilt, but not as a puppet to the interests of the Western Empire whose seat resides in D.C.

The war was wrong; the lies told to achieve it prove that. But what now? Iraq is a crushed place. We have pork barrel ideologues leading the supposed recovery of its basic systems . . . and daily, deadly acts of resistance against Americans, and Iraqis seen as sympathetic to them.

Some of the demonstrators want President Bush impeached. I want him defeated for re-election, kicked to the curb in the cleanest, most constitutionally clean election imaginable—so when he slinks back to Texas or wherever he came from, there are no excuses. I hope for clear and legal repudiation of his empire-building ambitions. In the meantime, he needs to be held accountable for the nightmare that he and his gang of proto-fascist ideologues have wrought in Iraq.

When the progressive movement resurrected in the '90s, its best motto was *Another World is Possible*. Then the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on American soil created an unimaginable new world, and no progressive response since has fit. Sept. 11's



message was clear: there are those who are indifferent to human suffering as a means to their end. There are those for whom nobody is innocent.

The Bush regime responded in kind—and nothing that happened in D.C. this past weekend will make any dramatic difference. Those holding the power on both sides—Western and Islamic—intend to play out their fanaticisms to endgame.

When fanatics are in power, they can be removed by assassination, invasion, *coup d'état*, or by the very power that installed them and upholds their reign—that of ordinary people. If there is to be any ridding the U.S. or the Middle East of its extremists, it will be by the mechanisms through which they finessed themselves into control.

Withdrawing from Iraq is not the right thing to do; we all share responsibility for the presence there of our occupying military forces. The Cold War ended and someone stupidly declared the U.S. the victor—what the mainstream press called the “last remaining superpower.” With American policy based upon this belief, a new opponent would inevitably rise to the challenge. A long history of cozy American relations with despots like Saddam Hussein made the Middle East a very likely source of this new opponent. Everything that has happened since Sept. 11, and is happening now, has proven that last century’s bloodbath of ideologies continues.

Against the world’s wishes, the U.S. invaded Iraq—building its case for war on lies—and bombed this sanctions-crushed country into rubble. The U.S. has since pointed to Iraq’s burned-out buildings and ruined houses of worship and said: “THERE. THERE IS YOUR ENEMY. HE IS CRUSHED. WE ARE SAFE.”

Safe as a country whose leaders no longer respect our own laws or citizens, much less the laws or citizens of any other country. Safe as a populace that has grown used to the idea of trying on leaders and returning them if they don’t fit right.

Meanwhile, we have a progressive movement both timid and shrill, like the scolding old lady at the end of the block rumored to have 50 cats and a shotgun—the cats because she feels lonely and unloved; the shotgun because perhaps she is still dangerous.

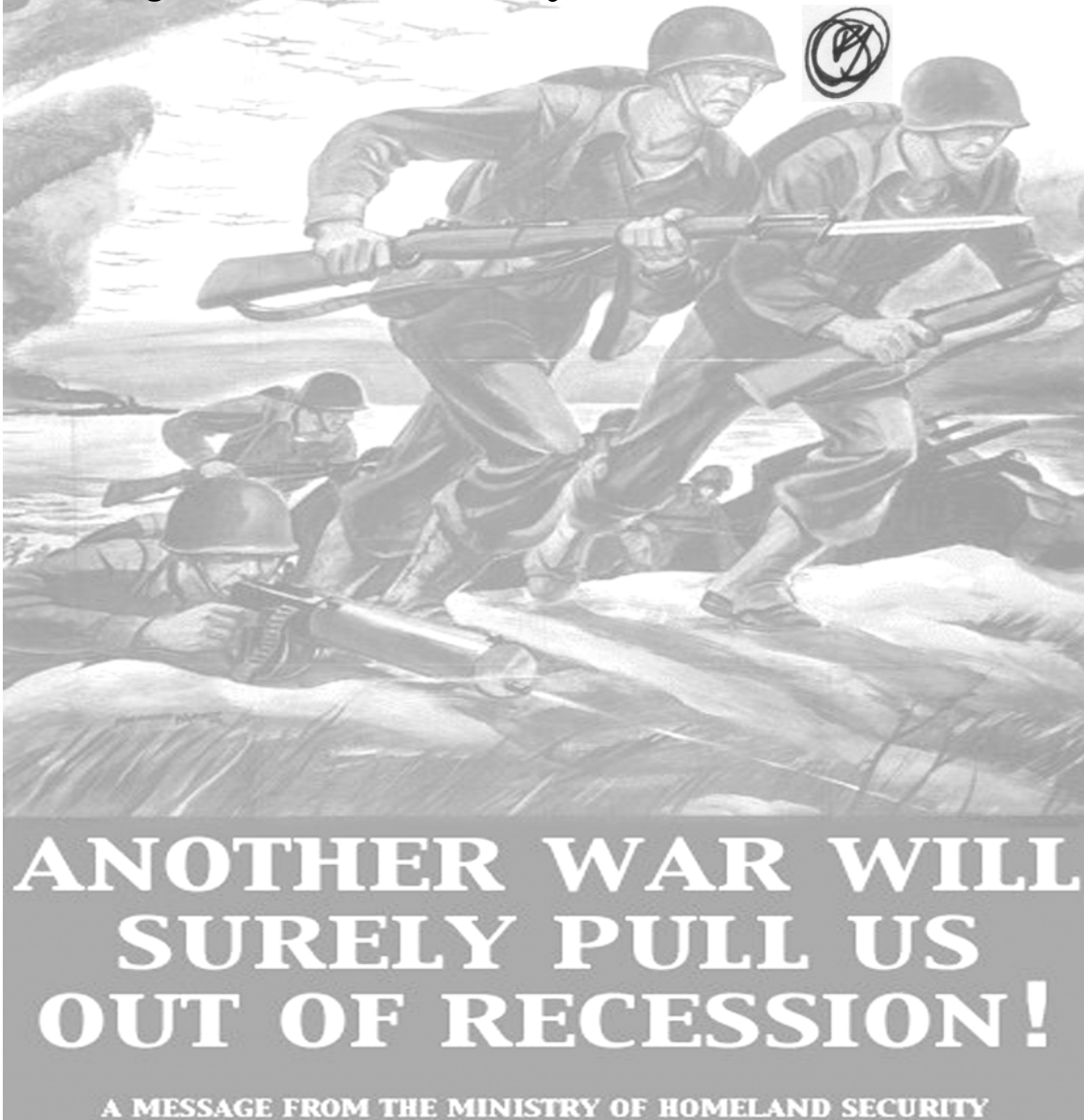
This whole situation is shameful. Withdrawal is too simplistic, and solves nothing. Yet occupation for the benefits of oil whores is immoral. So what is to be done? The tens of thousands of demonstrators in D.C. demanded that the U.S. to leave Iraq now.

I want the U.S. to cede to the U.N. the brunt of building a new society in Iraq made from Iraqi wishes—and the effort financed largely by U.S. dollars, since it was U.S. dollars that built the military might that destroyed Iraq. I think of this as an

answer, not *the* answer.

While tens of thousands lit through the Capitol's streets, media coverage—in both mainstream TV/newspapers and on progressive Web sites—was scant. Bombings in Baghdad continue. The Bush regime hypes the re-opening of a bridge in Iraq while those opposed to the U.S. occupation plan their next attack.

It will come today, and tomorrow, and a hundred tomorrows after that until something fundamentally different occurs there that involves both the will of the Iraqi people and the will of the world forged into what those in control in Washington do not wish for, and many in the progressive movement no longer ardently hope for: actions translatable from slogans in a crowd to reality.



GEORGE W. BUSH



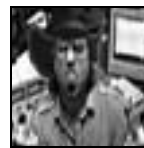
Top 50 Lies I Told

1. I am a compassionate conservative.
2. I will protect the environment.
3. I will retain regulations on CO₂.
4. I will increase funding for libraries.
5. I will leave no child behind.
6. I will restore honor-dignity-integrity to the White House.
7. I will continue to balance the budget.
8. I will put Social Security in a lock box.
9. I will increase the Pell Grant maximum award.
10. My tax cuts will not create deficits even in a recession.
11. I will fully fund LIHEAP— low income energy program.
12. I will listen to sound science and local officials before deciding on Yucca Mountain.
13. I have been to war.
14. Iran and North Korea have been allies against us.
15. Saddam kicked inspectors out of Iraq.
16. I knew nothing about a possible World Trade Center-type attack.
17. I will pay down a record amount of the federal debt.
18. I will not engage in nation-building.
19. Clinton people did an estimated \$200,000 damage to the White House.
20. Alabama military duty—I was there on a temporary assignment and fulfilled my weekends.
21. I will jawbone OPEC to open the wells.
22. I will have a bipartisan administration.
23. Iraq has a fleet of unmanned planes which could be targeted at the United States.
24. We have proof Al Qaeda has been involved with Iraq.
25. We will stop attacking Clinton.
26. I will provide \$100 million to preserve the rain forest.
27. Iraq is updating their nuclear program—we can tell by them having aluminum pipes.
28. We did not support the Venezuelan coup.

29. We have an agreement to make the largest disposal of nuclear warheads in history.
30. I believe in being held accountable.
31. You coal miners will get help from me.
32. We will not become the police of the world.
33. We should not execute anyone who is mentally retarded.
34. I have been off alcohol since I met Billy Graham.
35. Photo-op in Arizona during wildfires: "We will help."
36. Photo-op in Oregon at training center: "I will help."
37. I will veto bio-terrorism bill; it is too expensive.
38. Most small business owners pay income tax at the 39.6% rate.
39. Discovery of canisters is proof Iraq is not cooperating with the inspectors.
40. I am a uniter not a divider.
41. Ken Lay : "First met him in 1994."
42. Ken Lay supported my opponent.
43. Am Iraqi agent met with Al Queda Mohamed Atta in Prague.
44. I visited the Space Center in Houston while Governor.
45. The recession began before I took office.
46. I will have a humble foreign policy.
47. I support After-School programs.
48. I do not need polling to tell me what to think.
49. Iraq has made several attempts to buy high-strength aluminum tubes used to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons.
50. UN Inspectors were not allowed into Iraq before the 2003 US invasion.



RAYMOND SOULARD, JR.



6 x 36 Nocturnes

[sixth series]

*"The way things work
is that eventually
something catches."*

—Jorie Graham, 1996

[continued]

xix. Submission (for Lisa Marie)

Freedom in submission, in
emptiness, in pain,
in dreams lingering along late
winter bare branches,
in what continues, what insists,
berries sharp as laughter, solitary
walks soft & musical.

Freedom in submission to a crumbling
god, a diminishing threat, what
endures is your scent, what scratches
you possess me.

Freedom in submission, in confession,
in nature's hard press against one's
heart. Something loves us to love
each other. Something touches your
cheek with my hand. Something
licks in my ear with your smile.

Freedom in submission, in the pyre,
in what remains.
Freedom in our two hands reaching,
tonight, to release & keep each other's hearts.

xx. Sigh

No way out but through. Secrets, truths,
 light coiled in every treebranch. I look
 around for you, walk through your
 sugar, dream you in soft & in metal.
 Squeeze the branches, flick their protection
 toward you. Love. Raw. No way out but through.

Every leaf & bloom advise me await.
 Listen between the pangs, among the
 beats. Practice calm for the nearing
 pilgrimage. Bring water, paper, a wing
 of memories. Bring candles & nocturnes
 to burn. Moan & let go. Await.

Heady songs spelled out in stars tonight.
 Thoughts of roads twisting through silence,
 cornfields, mountains. Home left behind,
 home approaching in the morning. Do you
 feel it? Our nearing touch? The trees
 shimmering approval? Time roused, slowing?

The earth within presses me, seed & soil,
 & the flash, & the unfold, life wetly
 lashing forth, groan & pleasure, what
 preacher & king try to contain & play.
 Nothing going on but the war &
 the television. Something. Everything.

What love flickers & licks between us
 a sigh, still burgeoning. Seed & soil,
 await, then hurry. Sanity perhaps to be
 found on a harbor bench, a smoky confession,
 needs released, no way out but through.
 Love uncoiled, no way out but through.

Moan & let go. Await. One approaching
 wave will carry more than a sigh.
 Something built, four hands & a lengthy
 beast of days, approaches, is approached.
 What will remain more than sand,
 more than soil. New bones. Music. Roaring blood.

xxi. Emptiness.

There is no schism. Thus the night erupts & falls back.
 The emptiness adorns blood fat with love.
 The bond erupts & holds.
 The sky is what talks back by star & storm.
 The trees leaf with spring songs.
 Love traces an arc through emptiness.

Something shakes. You turn in your sleep. Again.

xxii. Longing.

Saying sacred makes it so. A wind nods,
 a woman laughs. Power shapes by cruiser as
 by water. Guts grab for guts. Counting angels
 leads to tears. Something in the night tries
 to hurry along in forgetful packs. But listen nearer.
 A heart full of secrets groans, steadies, pushes on.

xxiii. Demons.

What is hollow hurts the most.
 What no one can touch in you I moan.
 What fugitive words you ride to me tonight.

Half moon in the sky. Added, we round to
 one. City streets crawling with noise. Yes,
 added, we sum to one.

xxiv. Release (for Lisa Marie)

*“She followed slowly, taking a long time,
as though there was some obstacle in the way;
and yet: as though, once it was overcome,
she would be beyond all walking, and would fly.”*

—Rainer Maria Rilke, “Going Blind,” 1907-08

i. Waking the Lyre

The universe provides, I am told. Keep crawling.
The universe glows among ruins & blooms.

I will build you a new sky every day,
with ink, paintbrush, lyre, my heart;
what remains, what awaits.

Release tears you apart seeking you,
shears forged from heat cut light shaped by fear.

Bite of sun, bite of viper, bite of kisses.
The universe provides: keep this thought.
Tomorrow a new day, a new sky, nearer our departure.

ii. No Silence but Birds

Not a goddess but a girl. Both.
A brooding. A boiling.
Two stars fiercing for a god’s single glance.

A bite, a squeeze, then an emptiness.
A finger-stained badge where clutch
ceases, continues.

She moves on, into the shadows. Beckons.
Bring lyre, bring love. Bring memories
of starlight.

Toward the grove that was not there,
past the eyes that mumble of daily things.

Two stars have collapsed the moon by way
of goodbye & greeting.

iii. What Transforms, What Binds

I feel you descend. What is twin, stretches.

Following silence with noisy steps, sniffing
the invisible, for human tangle, call it
love.

Doubt steams among branches & trees.
Sleep demurs by bones & burrs.

Still: a great song brushes through the thickening shadow.

Then a dream: a crown of sweetgrass,
scent of clarity & freedom.

Nightfall, ever. Beyond tendrils of green,
our strum shudders, remains. We learned
it well. Still: mist growls, gathers you in.

iv. Neither a Christ nor Pussy Sell Out Tonight

Burn what's left. Watch the strings break
among growing grass.

A party. A bonfire. Artful deafness
for restless dancers.

The night still grips me, the fat
of my loins, the soft of my soul.

Still I hear you crying. For an angel.
For a man. For laughter. Sweets.

Let it all burn. Move fast. Reckon
the wind. Pack trust.

Nothing moves but something wishes to.
Something stomps, shakes. Call it a moan.

v. Purgation

I do not know how to love without being hurt

I do not know how to love without being hurt
by sucking it dry with my thirst & yearning

I do not know how to love without being hurt
by sucking it dry with my thirst & yearning
for myth & dream ALIVE aware whipping back

I do not know how to love without being hurt
by sucking it dry with my thirst & yearning
for myth & dream ALIVE aware whipping back
& forth with flame & roar, how to love

I do not know how to love without being hurt
by sucking it dry with my thirst & yearning
for myth & dream ALIVE aware whipping back
& forth with flame & roar, how to love
without kiss then crash, how to love without
pound & slam & grunt & blackness

I do not know how to love without being hurt
by sucking it dry with my thirst & yearning
for myth & dream ALIVE aware whipping back
& forth with flame & roar, how to love
without kiss then crash, how to love without
pound & slam & grunt & blackness, music
that smiles brighter until it no longer exists.

vi. Numinous

Then she turns & looks within. The strum continues
as it always has. Vipers & demons bite only so
deep. Love, & love's nameless god, web fiercely &
finely worlds without beginning or cease. She
turns & look within. Something jumps. Clusters
of words break before heart's holy roar.

vii. Release (Paralysis)

Life is suffering. Blame a toad. List
the kings & demons, storms dirged
to the world. Books will explain it,

if you read them. Life is suffering,
so tales the law. Never a beauty
won't be squeezed. Never a field won't

be fought. Life is suffering, enough for art,
enough for polity. Enough for the rootless
siege crossing men's minds. Enough until

a warrior Dream cries "Enough!"
Hands flare, feet shout. A lordly
fire among trees. Where more powerful

magicks are prayed it begins to be
whispered: Life is rapture. Many
of the ones who especially listen now

say: Life is rapture. Her every heartbeat
chimes my name. Her secret happiness is
laughter on my lips. Life is rapture.

viii. Howling

The viper bites, & bites again. Make no mistake:
fear collects everywhere to trip the world.
Viper of bullets & bruises. Viper will rip ragged
your music & dreams.

She collapsed among her oaks. Something hard
pulled her away. Tonight I trail her still.

The viper knew her well. A shadow in
her daisies, a breath among her lace.
She told me of the viper, of how it knew her,
how perhaps she was its own.

I crawl for you tonight. I listen. Horns &
flaws delay me. Still crawling. Your howl beckons me.

The viper taught you its bite, its craft.

Raise a doubt to a mountain, conjure
old demons, link their claws, choke your
flow. Who is trying to break you? Who's bitten whom?

You reach back to me, a pearled string of
desires & cries. Stretch. Howl. It holds. It holds.

ix. Cradle

You shine the moon tonight, touch
me again with your laughter, reflect
& elude, grip my heart, growl your
flag, shudder along me, break a demon,
fierce among others, shiver. Retreat.
Come back, & again. Your love a fist

when it must. Your prayers & days protect
me, unleash your blood like knives.
The girl in you becoming a warrior,
a wizard. A forest, a pack. I begin
to think of you as goddess, your love
a force within which I rock blindly.

x. Release (Waken)

Desire flares suffering. Moving bodies in
the firelight suck jars of elixir, still fail
to merge but crookedly. Drummers crowd
& romance the biggest moon, talk in
the rhythms of ten thousand years of hands;
still their feet snuffle in the dirt, still

a moan & collapse to silence. Still a silence
only men hunger to name. Suffering
builds castles, pushes up libraries, anoints
kings & jihads. Suffering fetches meals
by the slap, teaches children by the herd.
Suffering adores small gods & idiot passions,

receives twigs as meaty bones, acknowledges
 departure as power's gift. Release & reward
 from shovel & boot. Kick the earth. Ignore its reply.

She dreams of green leaves & other live young
 things. She whispers "desire" & "rapture" into her
 damp pillow. The trees nearby listen, & beckon me hurry.

xi. Law of Love

There is no law. A white blossom thrusts
 from river's trembles. The golden seer
 teaches pretty children the old songs he has
 traveled all his life. Sunshine & oaks
 nurture & jostle.

Open your eyes. Everything has moved again.

Sunshine & oaks teach pretty children songs
 only their skin will remember. Some become
 golden seers with few books & silken smiles.
 They teach when offered white blossoms to
 empathize, submit.

Open your eyes. Life yet. Work to do.

Hunger the familiar tone, centuries pass,
 perhaps there has been law. Some adventure
 in sacred geometry. Some point outward &
 say nothing. Perhaps laugh, rile up the drumming,
 dawn, hours later.

Noon against the crown. Afternoon against the collar.

White blossom opens along the evening,
 tolerance reigning toward release, midnight
 unto love, rapture breaks widely, beauty
 proclaimed by pale-eyed conspiracies.
 Hunger roars, spears apart hard secrets.

Open your eyes. The pretty children aren't sleeping
 anymore.

Some law lingers, quickens, unwritten but
 observed. Golden seers each contain a bright
 season, some fine shaping gesture, something
 kind, empathetic, love fiercest in dancing
 fingertips. We listen with creaturely attraction.

What can anyone see ahead? Resolution riddled
 by evolution.

Remembrance of white blossom opening
 at dawn, & what yet clings to the eyes at
 day's height. A golden seer hands round seeds,
 leads rushes into oaks & sunshine. Nearer
 seeing now. Smiling & singing.

Nothing's changing but the tide. Open your eyes.
 You're awake now. There is no law.

xii. Sacrificial

The candle burns this morning as a tribute
 to the dawn.

I watched you through the night as your
 dreams touched my face.

What climbs between us is a magick,
 a healing carol, damp wings.

Our minds slip through each other,
 hurry & lurch like humans, laugh & pray & build.

What's left behind less matter & sentiment than
 rust. Love is the only law. Law collapses to the free.

Take my hands & find release. We'll return as stolen
 children to the night. Older songs & slower hours await us.

xiii. Release (Mending)

A singing in the heart. Your beauty that of
trees, & wind. Language in the blood, the heat
of desire & doubt. Daytimes of silence, what
happens irrelevant. Nighttimes of prophecy,
fists hold a heartbeat. Dread explains hurry.
You breathe for my safety.

A singing in the heart. Regard my hands: they make
for you. Were they branches, thus fruit.
Were they silence, thus wisdom. Hope explains hurry.
Daytime mere sugar, a fruitless passing.
Something stares bluntly from your want.
Possession. Faith without expectation.

A singing in the heart. Spires fierce, damage
real, love is mending. Traffic muddies the
resolve, awhile. Pain explains hurry.
Eventual days dress for union, &
nights for shadowless vows. You sniff my
music, feel me coming. Our trial will never end.

xiv. Bountiful

Something loves us to love each other.
I sleep on the ground near pears & ink.
Our love becomes a soil where unbidden
things grow.

These days erect colossus, wanting & warm.
Some text jointly composes our dreams,
nib of starlight dipped in flame.
A necklace of songs strung between our hearts
holds secrets yet beyond our ken.

xv. Rising

The lyre becomes sabre, the backbone
armor. No way out but through. The road
covers miles of grit & speculation. What
approaches confrontation, a park, two shadows.
(Meanwhile days cluster, rally green & red
closely.) Perhaps clarity's kiss. Hands fierce

for truth. No way out but through. Love
bites, doubts, perhaps braves it secret war.

xvi. Chasing Angels

Chasing angels, hurry, flames, shoot the pipes—

Chasing angels, adventure, willows & creatures
beyond fear and time—

Chasing angels, she swings into my face
like old—

Chasing angels, she swings away &
I hear “follow”—

Chasing angels, trees tall as stars,
kisses imagining new worlds—

Chasing angels, sabres and sweets, “follow”—

Chasing angels, drink elixir in the carriage,
squirming in shadows, mumbling holiness rants—

Chasing angels, I watch the sky broaden,
begin to whisper sugar into my sleeves—

Chasing angels, you're watching me, you're
wanting me, you're undressing my mind—

Chasing angels, begin, continue, a pebble
etched with hope—

Chasing angels, I carry your heart around
my neck, and a rhythm of your sunshine—

Chasing angels, the days have no weight,
the nights no touch, the growl within me
nears the surface—

Chasing angels, I call you wife, tell you
“follow,” you tell me “follow,” we are soon
colliding, a truth with teeth, a maybe no more.

xvii. Release (Witness)

Widening my ripple to meet you where
dreams shade into sun.
I bring my cloaks & cask of music.

The road wields me smoothly now,
no hustles, no lies.
You're a faith, a siege, a drift to better days.

What pilgrims find in marshes & mountains
I feel you breathing along my skin.
Air & water. Ink & candles. Love's furies.

Less hurry than will purged my home,
drove me toward you. What companions
me now a thrumming's acceleration.

Tridents of heat ride muscle & bone,
my cause a riddle preaching from within;
another hill nearer, neither hope nor fear.

xviii. Kiss (Breaking the Lyre)

Orpheus followed Eurydice into the underworld,
strumming pangs, oaths, & loving cries,
shimmying, stumbling. Blankness. A trail
he sniffed by the lingering rhythms of her
blood, nymph's liquid light, within elixir strange
& vulnerable to what drips ceiling to floor,
nothing to nothing. What brushed him on
the cold of rust's breath all around,
fear of fake idols of a fake release. Ceasing
to invent the world with his instrument's
tapestries of flame, resistance diminished to
the distracting talk of professors & politicians,
he could not play away what was gathering.

Burning tunic & lyre he conjured from a place
 where silk & music still blend. Burning
 released two fingers of dust & a cataclysm
 of light. Eurydice appeared, impossibly far,
 eyes closed, lips open, waiting, waiting for him still.

xix. Nearing

There is hope. Back of hills in shadow,
 beyond jams of metal & flesh. There is
 hope. Raw earthly dreams say so.
 Secret persistent flames. What approaches.
 What awaits. There is hope. Something
 likes the world softly golden, greenly thrusting.

I make a new lyre & prepare to sing to you.
 Within this instrument collected our thrash
 & our sugars. The carriage grinds forth,
 mile to mile, meal to meal. Comes a dawn
 of wild orange eyes, landscape too flat
 for telling, & I am nearly ready.

There is hope. A change of skies, from
 crops to dust, the mind bounds ahead,
 the heart crawls back. Agreement finally
 by sage who pisses & smiles & says:
 "No expectation. There is hope. The child's
 for knowing touch. The pilgrim's for kinder moon."

Who seeks whom, my love? Who rescues,
 who receives? I hold this new-born
 instrument & feel your raw want, the remaining
 freedom of your dreams. Which music,
 what kiss, will retrieve you? There is hope
 as I strum & will it so. Grope. Trust.

xx. Release (Ecstasy)

Love is everything. Blossoms atop a bottomless
 well. Sun nourishing utterly til divine & its pain
 are abandoned. Rapture. Soul plus soul sum to soul.

xxi. Happiness

We will appear before each other again,
 & touch, call the moment "release,"
 & begin to climb.

The first time the world disappeared.
 No underworld. No sunlight. Only love.
 We agree: love is everything.

A kiss, & again. There is no world.
 No music, no starlight. No blending.
 No bleeding. Skin's nearness. Breathing.

We will appear before each other again,
 & touch, call the moment "release,"
 & in beginning to climb renew the world.

Where once doubt would have turned
 us to look back, caught by teeth & fear,
 we will kiss. Like lips to water. Hands to sky.

Love is everything. Become muscled, it runs.
 Nurtured bones, it builds. Hearts gladdened,
 it sings. Watch us marry, & begin the world.

xxii. Recursive

A dream so fierce it makes a world.
 Blood & pain of a myth crawling into the sun.
 Your love wields fist & light. Shaking. Power.
 Your love will crush miles & hours alike.
 This time you are the bite not the bitten.
 I strum for you. Music dapples your path.
 You hurry. No world. No starlight. You hurry.

xxiii. Acceleration

A sudden breath & the world newly opens.
 Desire smiles & reveals slowly. Release
 is near. Don't look back.

The underworld helpless heeds strumming
 but not his. Hers. The myth cracks
 into a wonderwall of notes. Strum. Faster.

No viper. Not anymore. A flicker of power
 & the poison is gone. Never was. Who rescues
 whom? The world newly opens. Don't look back.

Strumming joins strumming, love is kind but
 hark its roar. The underworld diminishes,
 is gone. Never was. A sudden breath. Desire smiles.

Love is everything, the only way through,
 the only way out. Release in submission,
 strum, dance. Hazel eyes fierce. Music begins our world.

A vessel of water, dish of fruit. This morning
 is rapture, spirits & schemes. She laughs
 past shadows falling. Call it a dream. Know it's more.

xxiv. Release (Celestial)

Something loves us to love each other,
 some mad roar for Beauty that prowls
 throughout the world. Something devastating
 to order. Something deeper than every fear.
 We persist. Our treasure. Our pain.
 I carry you into the sunlight, finally.
 It burns awhile, then begins to heal.



To be continued in *Cenacle* / 51-52 / Winter 2004

BARBARA BRANNON



North Carolina Sketchbook



JULY 4, 2002. I have to roll back the calendar a ways to get to the start of the North Carolina chapter, the one I'm in now, the third act, the one in which I play the part of a university professor and the custodian of an entity called The Publishing Laboratory. I wonder sometimes how the path led to here, to the coastal reaches of North Carolina where generations of my forebears farmed, fished, built boats and buggies and houses.

There is a curious intersection to these events. It begins on this date, in the far northwestern corner of North Carolina. On the other side of the state, in Wilmington, my mother would have been seventy years old today, though she died six years earlier. It is in that city, her hometown, some 450 miles from here, that I will take up residence in a few short weeks—because Kay has just accepted a position with the Wilmington *Star-News* and I'm not about to stay behind in Columbia. There are still important decisions to be

made, but we consider it an auspicious sign that our weekend plans take us to the state of North Carolina for the holiday weekend.

We introduce ourselves to the hosts at Camp Pleiades as the newest residents of the Tar Heel State. Congratulations are offered all around, toasts drunk. In our tent that evening we look up at the stars and marvel that this has come to pass. There is an irresistible force drawing us coastward, and we will feel its pull in the coming weeks as surely as the tidal creeks feel the moon.

But for now, we hike up in the heights, gaze across the vast tree-carpeted valleys, swim in the stream-fed mountain lake, make up new definitions of the word *home*.



Fall 2002. Slowly the seasons turn, and Wilmington does become home. We move into a house that was built—or built onto—by one of the old-time writers for the *Star-News* when it was the *Wilmington Morning Star*, in 1917. I trade the editing life for teaching at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. I'm taken with this idea of The Publishing Laboratory, which embodies the culmination of everything Soulard and I have debated and produced over a number of years. I plan my first class for the Pub Lab, a course called Desktop Publishing for Book Design.

In November we have a surprise visitor who comes to stay long-term: my daughter Beth, sick to death of Iowa snow and married life. She plunges right into job and volunteer work in Wilmington, soon registers for classes at Cape Fear Community College. Music takes its hold on her more than ever, when she discovers the local karaoke-bar community. We try out clubs together; I'm amazed at her quickness and talent. By next summer she'll land a regular gig at Carolina Beach, hosting the karaoke show herself and building a following.



Winter and spring 2003. Work in the Pub Lab begins in earnest, an endeavor that keeps me far busier than I could have imagined. New possibilities open up in the spring, when the Lab acquires a print-on-demand book bindery and suddenly we're empowered to create our own books start to finish. I and my students experiment with lots of new publications. But by the brink of summer I'm burned out and ready for a break.



We are learning to make the most of being on the water, situated as we are between the Cape Fear River, only a few blocks to our west, and the Atlantic Ocean, six miles to the east, with the numerous creeks and marshes and inlets between. We spend time at Airlie Gardens, a favorite spot on the Intracoastal Waterway. I take my paper-grading chores out to the beach to make the job less of a chore. We go watch when tall ships call at the port on the Cape Fear River.



RAYMOND SOULARD, JR.



Secret Joy Amongst These Times: The History of Scriptor Press, 1995 to the Present

*“Think for yourself
& question authority”*
—Dr. Timothy Leary

Chapter Six

continued from
The Cenacle / 49 / October 2003

[Note: I finished the Emerson College (Boston, Massachusetts, USA) thesis version of this history writing about a year still going, 1999, writing as close to the present moment as thesis guidelines & deadlines allowed. Ideas expressed hereon, events described, were ongoing, part of this moment's equation, the heat of its now. The revised ending of this chapter, as well as future chapters, will continue the story.]

Driving around Burlington, Vermont with Barbara Brannon on 12/31/98, & I'm tripping, just come earlier that day from a shitty temp job in Cambridge, MA that I will end up quitting in about two weeks. Still, it was during free moments at that job that I got onto the Internet & communicated with many about the Burning Man 1999 Arts Fest—& I used the extensive facilities at that workplace to help me type up a paper for a class in American literary publishing, & to help me produce *Cenacle* 31 December 1998. Shitty temp job: We used each other well, & up.

I started talking to Barbara about a new idea I have, & a new concept: “horizontal hierarchy.” Nearing the other end of 1999, I am still working out what this idea means, but here's what I have so far: the traditional American pyramid hierarchical system turned on its ear. Traditionally, power is at the top in the hands of a few; further down, less power in more people's hands; at the bottom, the workers, the greatest numbers, least amount of power.

So it presently works: power, influence, money. Centers of authority: New York, high culture (stage, museums, publishing); Los Angeles, entertainment (TV & movies & music); Boston/Cambridge, academic (Harvard, MIT); Pacific Northwest, technological (Microsoft,

Silicon Valley); Washington, D.C., political, legislative. & so on. Network TV. *Billboard* popcharts. Multiplex cinemas. Microsoft. McDonald's. Malls. CNN. MTV. HBO. Super Bowl. *USA Today*. President Clinton. President Next. Time-Warner.

We are given to believe that these authorities are right to tell us how things are & are to be. They are right because they are big. They are big because they are right. They grow bigger every day. Mergers. Takeovers. Bigger ad campaigns. They tend nearer & nearer each other all the time. Fast food chains with websites. Ice cream makers with a line of jeans. "Y2K: The Movie" coming in November on NBC-TV (I'm not kidding about this last one!).

I am an actor I must go to Los Angeles.

I am a writer I must go to New York.

I am a rap singer I must get on MTV.

OK?

True?

Yes?

Right? Necessary? Truth? Final & forever truth? What about the Internet? What about MP3 technology? What about independent film festivals? What about a man hawking his hand-made books of poems to passers-by on the Boston Common?

What about Burning Man?

(What about it, Soulard?)

Horizontal hierarchy posits that there is no authentic center of culture, politics, authority, truth, reality. Just as there is no center of the universe, there is no place on this planet with a privileged say over any topic or activity.

Godd doesn't live in Jerusalem.

Europe doesn't own culture.

Asia has no exclusive claim to wisdom.

America possesses only temporal power, neither eternal nor infinite.

Horizontal hierarchy posits the metaphor of existence as limitless ocean, limitless in depth & breadth, beneath limitless sky, infinite universe beyond. Islands in the ocean, under the ocean, in the sky, in the universe, all floating toward or away from each other at all times, islands clumping together, then scattering, wisdom & truth & the tendency toward sacred Art everywhere the binding, beautiful tendency, all is connected, all is good, no final obstacle, no last room, none but passing authority for Beauty & Truth are free & untamed & cannot be kept. Secret joy amongst *all* times. . .

Thou art Godd. I am Godd. All that exists is Godd. All is connected. The many are the one is the many on & on like this. Scriptor Press in 1999 now serves these ideas. Here's how . . .

In January 1999 I began attending the weekly "Psychedelic Cafe" open-mic nights at the Zeitgeist Gallery in Cambridge, MA. Live

poetry, music, performance art, strange films & slides projected on the wall, acid, booze & weed . . . an event nearer to the freewheeling Jellicle Guild than any other I'd been to in Cambridge. I signed up there to be a DJ at their radio station, Radio Free Cambridge, 106.1 FM & on 1/30/99 began hosting a show I call "The Within's Within:



Scenes from the Psychedelic Revolution with Soulard" on Saturdays noon-2. This show features psychedelic music new & old by the likes of Phish, Grateful Dead, Beatles, Pink Floyd, Yes, & the younger "jambands" like Moe., Uncle Sammy, and Percy Hill; readings from psychedelic literature by the likes of Aldous Huxley, Alan Watts, Albert Hofmann, & Timothy Leary; new poetry, prose, & music performed by longtime friends such as Jim Burke III, Joe Ciccone, Barbara Brannon, & Ric Amante; & news about relevant current events such as Burning Man & efforts as legalization of marijuana, LSD & similar psychoactive substances. I often trip when doing this show; I often rant about the beauty & perfection of every day in the universe; I put on as good a show as I know how for whoever is within WRFC's 100-watt range. In August & September, when I was on the road to Burning Man in Nevada, I sent back reports of travelling to & from the event & what happened at it as well.

In February 1999 I went down to New York City to the Wetlands Preserve nightclub to see Percy Hill, Uncle Sammy, Miracle Orchestra, & Mishap all perform. Jambands one & all with growing followings but little commercial airplay because their songs are long & complex & defy commercial format definitions. But flourishing nonetheless & often coming together during summertime for huge Woodstock '69-style festivals that attract audiences often over 100,000. Not a single hit among them.

In March 1999 I applied for the BookBuilders of Boston scholarship. My essay read in part:

I believe that men and women who elect to make a career of publishing are directly participating in creating the future of humankind. Creating the future meaning inventing it, showing the billions who inhabit this planet what good things the future offers as well as the possible consequences of our sometime tendencies toward greed, prejudice, selfishness, and undirected fear. The decisions we who discover our need to participate in publishing will not allow itself to go unheeded make every day affect every individual we will ever know and every individual we will never know.

I didn't receive any money; it went to an individual whose interests were more exclusively in book publishing. While I wish that person good luck, I foresee that the coming world will be much more about pursuing many different forms of communication as horizontal hierarchy replaces vertical.

Also in March 1999 *Cenacle* 32-33 Winter 1999 appeared, featuring a new contributor, longtime friend John Barton, his notes on the Millennium, a prose piece that gestated from a series of emails he & I exchanged about that topic. He writes:

It is not a coincidence that civilization goes through fin-de-siècle madness times time every thousand years. Human beings are responsible for all these great changes and syntheses coalescing as the Millennium arrives. Human beings devised the calendar designating which year will be the "Millennium." It is entirely manmade, like our gods. It is not the will of Revelations or the Qabbalah, nor that of the Koran nor the Bhagavad-Gita, that things of import come to pass every thousand years. It is the will of the men who wrote those works, holy though they may be, and the men who every thousand years still believe in them.



Two of my contributions were lengthy poems of recent vintage. "Millennial Artist's Survival Guide" from 11/98 which opens:

*There is a secret joy amongst these
times, a within's within, a known
and speckled spectral thing, an exploding
blare & swoop from between our dreams,
a series of coded midnight shadows,
glyphs taut with our best laughter, all cosmos,
we are all cosmos, without & within.
We are all cosmos. We are careening.
We need to begin now, trade into ecstasy,
we are beginning now. Always beginning now.*

& "Beauty, Afflictus" from 2/99 which opens:

*If someone were to fall into intimate slumber, sleep of the
golden eyes, sleep of the murmuring grey fields, & slept deeply
with Things, shiny pinkcheeked Things, Things of whisper &
wet, Things both the cup & its holder, Things elusive like
worthy cathedrals, how easily he would come to a different day,
a longer day, a day that will not melt with the passing hours,
how easily he would come to a different day, out of mutual
depth, how deeply eternity badges us, out of mutual depth,*

twining spasms of remembrance, chilling glints of smiling mystery, out of mutual depth, have we yet begun, Beauty, refracted, defined, slept into, seduced sacredly, seduced musically, Beauty, obscura, today is never going to end, courtyard of twisting breezes, out of mutual depth, love is a mean, chanting, obsessed motherfucker & you are his favorite song.

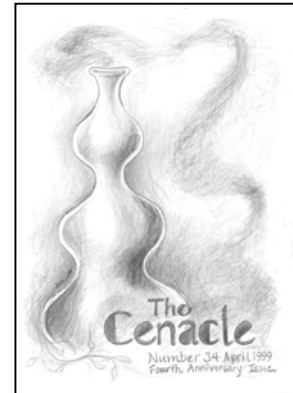
I was happy with this new poetry for it honored the lessons I'd learned from Rilke & Dickinson & Rumi while communicating my deeply-cherished beliefs about life, Art, & joy.

Among Joe Ciccone's contributions was a wild prose-poem "Almost a Thumbnail Sketch of What Seems Like the Part of the Story that Always Seems Somehow to be Absent, or, A Veiled Recounting of a Moment of Clarity" with its lead guitar howlings:

And the we grew tired but nonetheless we kept up, somewhat more slowly now, but we kept up, such that all I could do was bang the strings like a drum, and Dave's voice grew thin, and Paul's harp blew down to a murmur, and we were no longer running madly but dancing thinly until we were slowly walking and the sounds became a memory as the moon pulled up and we looked up to see how it had so strangely stopped itself in the sky in mid-swing, and we all sat down, exhausted, and became, at last, human.

In April 1999 appeared *Cenacle* 34 4th anniversary issue with another color cover by Barbara Brannon, this one tied to my poem "Phantom Limbs (After Rumi)" which Barbara also rendered in color. It's a long poem based on 3 short poems by the Persian master. Rumi is, in fact, one of the greatest poets ever & deserves far more renown in the west than he has thus far received.

Cenacle 34 also featured "Illogic, Signs, and Aesthetic Relevancies Reconsidered" by Joe Ciccone, his first contribution of fiction:

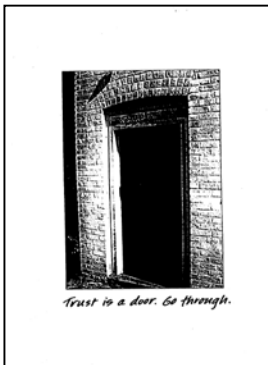


I open the door and she's laying in bed, as I expect, with her head stretched out over the record player, listening to the Everly Brothers sing "All I have to do is dream-ee-ee-ee-eam." When she hears me come in she raises her finger from the sheets and points toward the ceiling, signaling me to be quiet. Always it seems to be like this when I come home; sense appears to hold no authority. I rest my keys gently on the table and watch her. It's like she staring straight through her ears, expecting some coded transmission that only she can decipher to come at any moment from out of the scratchy recording,

disclosing to her the secrets of the universe. I do find some comfort merely in the regularity of this image, although at the expense, I guess, of its reality. It feels sometimes like it's just another picture on the wall.

It's a very clever story but so well-written that its cleverness does not destroy it.

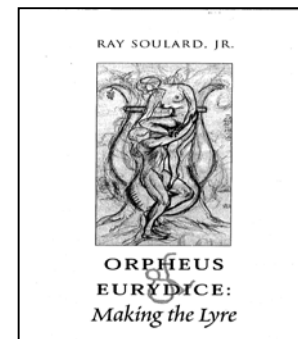
Also in this issue appeared "Photo Studies by Mio Cohen," a friend I'd made recently & with whom I'd travel to Burning Man in August. Her work returned creative photography to the pages of *The Cenacle* & in *Cenacle* 35 June 1999 more of her work appeared. She



likes to take pictures that work with the lines, shapes, & angles of natural scenes, especially forests & rocky shorelines.

In May 1999 Scriptor Press produced more projects in addition to *The Cenacle*, Jellicle Guild, "Within's Within," & *ElectroLounge*. My Orpheus poems were made by Barbara Brannon into a 34-page chapbook, *Orpheus & Eurydice: Making the Lyre*, to be distributed to longtime *Cenacle* contributors and beyond as RaiBook Number One. Also that month *Scriptor Press Sampler* 1999 #1 appeared, culling in a 24-page chapbook writing & art from recent *Cenacles* by Soulard, Ciccone, Burke, Shorette, Brannon, & Amante.

These new projects were intended to spread the work of myself & my colleagues much farther than before but *on our terms*. These items are not for sale nor have they been judged by the New York publishing power center nor do they depend on New York for their production or distribution. Art by the people for the people. Such is the growing trend in the world today. Not all are non-profit but more & more the advances in technology & consciousness have worked together to offer alternatives to Time-Warner & its kind. Of course not every independently produced book, record, or film is of superlative merit, no more than are commercial issues. The point here is that individuals with unconventional visions and often disdain for the machine-indifferent qualities of commercial media now have other options, viable ones, alternative ways for communicating their visions.



In June 1999 appeared *Cenacle* 35. In my "Soulard's Notebooks" I write:

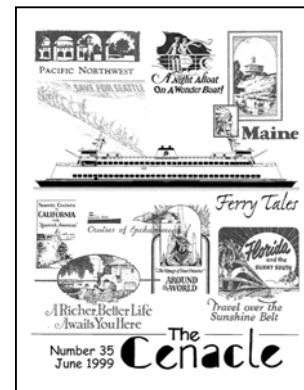
Begin crazy grin, guitars twisting into electric wind, something they'd like to say with naked notes, licking her arm calmly, out of money, jumping behind the bar to draw a free mug, no headlights & midnight & 100 mph & wrong side of the road, mixing E with K with G just to see what'll happen this time, the

*risk of not risking, until you've tried it all & do it all & be it all
you haven't, & time passes, & you probably won't, & time is up
& you didn't, most of us on a deathbed only once, yet most of
us live like our lawless carnal hedonist mad dreams didn't
exist, most of us behave without prompting, cower while not
compelled, will settle for whatever pathetic little we are given,
adjust our internal mathematics lower & lower, our breeze a
hurricane, our Malden an Emerald City, our deepest desires TV
dinner on the couch—*

On the credits page is now included mention of all other Scriptor Press projects: Electrolounge, RaiBooks, *Scriptor Press Sampler*, "Within's Within," & of course the Jellicle Guild.

The many Seattle poems Ric Amante has been writing he culled & reworked & Barbara illustrated them & the resulting piece was called "Ferry Tales." A piece of artwork by a person named Harold Cunniff appeared. He'd seen *SPS* 1999 #1 at one of its distribution points in Boston & submitted to it not ever having seen *The Cenacle*! Mark Shorette's story "Wherefore" marked his first fiction in *The Cenacle* since 1995:

*Incantation of the eyes.
Behold, behold, the shining retinas which merge dualities
into singleness
singleness which transcends the two from
which it was
whelped
for singleness is the birth of the hound of
heaven
behold in shining sleekness as she courses
about the
perimeter of time
young eyes behold always
old eyes behold, as death approaches
between, the gaze is broken, but by a few,
selected, chosen
by the handsome courser as she goes along, chasing the
deceitful prey.*



How glorious in pursuit is she!

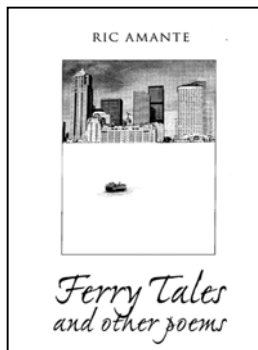
Ciccone's contribution is a 4-page poem called "Merwin" dedicated to his poetic mentor:

*But for today, unmet friend,
all there is through the lens of this window are the same
stone towers, the highway with its tumbling whir
unending, beside the tracks that give way at times to the
windless train bearing off its dead, the puff of birds with their*

dusty feathers, the clouds with their nightmares locked inside them, and beyond them all, the sun, shining bright as ever, and me with all these pompous claims to which I shall hold fast, setting off alone the

other way, grateful to you more than many, though alone as ever, with only the waves of your ocean, whose echoes are themselves, keeping me deliberate company, lapping up equally in each direction, quiet, quiet, quiet, quiet;

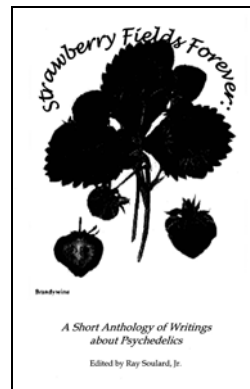
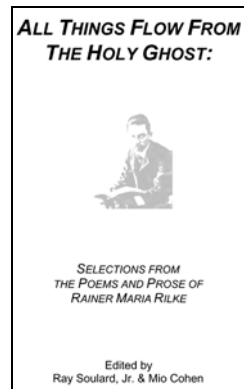
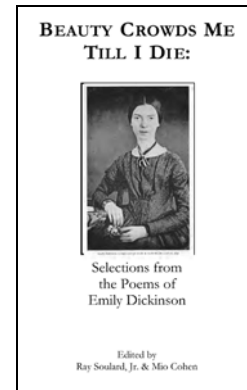
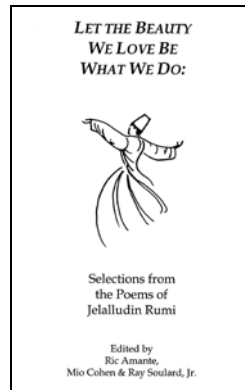
It would be several months before the next *Cenacle* but I had a lot of other work ahead of me.



In August 1999 I devoted my full time to Scriptor Press's newest project: Burning Man Books. Working with Mio Cohen, I produced 5 titles intended for the Burning Man Arts Festival 1999 Aug 30-Sep 6 to be distributed there at our No Borders Barter Bookstore & More—in addition to SPS 1999 #1, *Orpheus*, & the newly-published RaiBook Number Two, *Ferry Tales & Other Poems*, brought into being by Barbara Brannon & myself.

Burning Man Books inaugurated a “special projects division” of Scriptor Press. Its titles included: *Let the Beauty We Love Be What We Do: Selections from Poems of Jelalludin Rumi*; *Are You Ready for Burning Man 1999?—a coloring book*; *Beauty Crowds Me Till I Die: Selections from the Poems of Emily Dickinson*; *All Things Flow From The Holy Ghost: Selections from the Poems and Prose of Rainer Maria Rilke*; & *Strawberry Fields Forever: A Short Anthology of Writings about Psychedelics*. These books (save for the coloring book, which was for fun) contain vital art that is not often enough gotten into the hands of people who simply cannot afford to buy volumes of them in bookstores. The point of disseminating art has nothing to do with commercial gain; artists wish to share their visions, their struggles, their joys, the ways they've found to make it in this world. Art brings edification & entertainment to a world full of people in great need of these. No profit has been or even will be sought from these titles. A higher moral purpose is at stake: to make people happy, encourage them to keep trying, show them they are not alone with their struggles & woes, & that art is there is heal, and that there are people who want to make sure its healing powers are spread as far & as wide as possible.

We arrived at the festival & spent several days with many others helping our friend Chuck Nichols erect his Temple of the Eternal Mysteries (TOTEM). On 9/3/99 & 9/4/99 we set up our bookstore near the temple & bartered our books for seashells, necklaces, firedances, stories, smiles. It was *fantastic*. I also wrote poems for people on request because I think it's a shame so few people have had poems written for them. Every person should have at least one :)

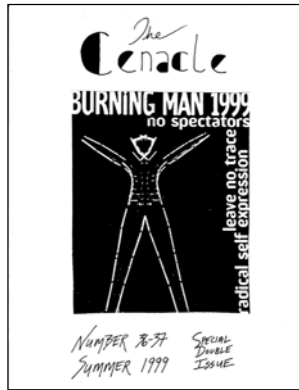


In September 1999, back from Burning Man, there was a Jellicle Guild meeting at Mark Shorette's home in Plainville, CT—not Roma Restaurant because its new owner had closed it for renovations. At that meeting Ric Amante's book was debuted.

Finally, in October of 1999, *Cenacle* 36-37 Summer 1999, an issue devoted to the sights, sounds, & words of Burning Man was produced.

This is the fifth in an annual series of summer issues of The Cenacle. Instead of devoting this installment's pages to a single author, this year the focus is an event: The Burning Man Arts Festival, which took place August 30-September 6, 1999 in Black Rock Desert, Nevada. That is to say, Black Rock City, Nevada, for Burning Man is an event and a place. And a state of mind. And a mystery. And a miracle. And so on.

It was debuted on 10/23/99 at the Jellicle Literary Guild meeting held at Curious Liquids Cafe in Boston, where I'm happy to report there were more people in attendance than in a long time: Amante, Burke, Brannon, Cohen, Dillon, Shorette, & Souland—and onlookers attracted by the poetry & music being performed joined in as audience & participants. I also received a Power Macintosh from Barbara Brannon as a gift, & have decked it out with laser writer, CD burner,



scanner, QuarkXPress, Photoshop, & whatever else I need to maintain control over *The Cenacle's* means of production in the future.

There is no real conclusion to this story, as it is ongoing. During the composition of this thesis, roughly late September to late November 1999, I was also working on *Cenacle* 36-37 Summer 1999, and *Cenacle* 38 October 1999, and planning for the third RaiBook, the poetry and prose of Joe Ciccone. I added a chat room, bulletin board, & guest book to *The ElectroLounge*, too. The work does not end and,

nearly five years into this project, the realization of Scriptor Press's potential has hardly begun.

[Hereon the tale continues from the perspective of several years' distance]:

In some sense, my thesis itself became the next Scriptor Press project, for it consumed me until its acceptance and publication by Emerson College—as much as the December 1999 *Cenacle* would have, had it been made. I am of the opinion that my advisors, including Writing and Publishing program director Dr. Douglas Clayton, for the most part let me do what I was determined to do: promote a kind of countercultural platform by way of telling my press's history. So was my intent, and so it went. My thesis, this history's original version, now resides between hard covers up in Boston. I have not seen it to this day.

Thesis accepted, I was done with my second master's degree and decided to celebrate by going down to the Everglades in Florida on Millennial weekend to attend a rock festival hosted by Phish. I arranged via the Internet and email for some people to travel with, four persons in their late teens and early twenties. Passing through New York City and into New Jersey we all got into the black van that was our transport. It felt very tribal, huddled close, driving fast, puffing grass, blasting music. Getting more and more excited the closer we got. The northeast cold was left behind for the odd warmth of Fort Lauderdale and thereabouts.

No money for a hotel, we simply drove around, dodging cops, sitting on the beach, joining in the tavern celebrations of other fest goers. It seems like a dream now. Yet the details return to me: touching warm ocean water in December; huddling in our van in some obscure driveway to sleep a little while; the long drive down a straight narrow road to Big Cypress, where Seminole Native Americans welcomed about 100,000 of us and did not question our social choices as the would-be empire behind us did daily.

My experiences at Burning Man led me to want to try the bookstore idea at BC as well. Jambands like Phish are well known for having a very active homegrown commerce scene in the parking lots of the venues at which they play. The grid-like, Black Rock City-like

layout of tents and RVs at BC, complete even with a colorful map given out upon arrival, as well as the aforementioned tolerance of our hosts, led to the festival-wide sale/trade/barter of many kinds of things. Handmade wares including jewelry and clothing, all sorts of food, and a lovely array of entheogenic products.

So I set up a blanket along a main walkway, and laid out the same titles I'd brought to Burning Man many months before and thousands of miles away. What I had to reckon with was that unlike in Black Rock City, where everyone shared what they had and gave their art away freely, the long-haired denizens of Phish tour are very much commerce-minded. So I devised a scheme involving a little sign which read "Books for a dollar. Free if you read aloud from one."

This scheme seemed to work. Some people chose to transact cash for books, but others cleared their throats and read out proudly. I remember this experience and my first time at Burning Man as very powerful times of learning about how many more possible manners of exchange existed than I'd known previously.

There was one show on Saturday night, then another Sunday afternoon, but the big event was the all-night show that began at midnight on January 1, 2000. Despite dire warnings, the power grid of the Western World did not go out. Phish came on stage and rocked for more than six hours with little of a break. At the afternoon show I broke my psychedelic fast of several weeks and swallowed about seven hits of something good. Later on, there was even more, but already by show's end I was not in anything resembling a conventionally functioning state. Black helicopters over the open-air venue, likely TV news crews, were to my rapidly ascending mind iniquitous government forces out to herd us all into cages. I made the mistake of asking someone else what was going on, and when he said he didn't know this only confirmed my worst fears. I wondered if I had really just been at a rock show, if Phish really existed. When I ran into one of my traveling mates, I grabbed his shoulders tightly. "Are you real?" I asked him. "Yes!" he smiled. "Am I?" I asked, more desperately.

In the remaining hours before the midnight show I was writhing in my tent in the deeps of this very powerful acid journey. Many, many hits of pure West Coast liquid. I lost sense of what money was, what written language meant, what time signified, nearly all things save my name and where my tent was located in what now seemed like an incoherent maze of people and camping digs. I went deep into demons, and well beyond demons. I went to the Void, where no thing is. I was no thing in the Void. It seemed inevitable that I would go there. I feared ending up insane, among people lovely but who I barely knew, hundreds of miles from Boston and what I called home there.

One of my traveling partners had said to me, on his way to get a close seat for the midnight show: "Follow the music. It will always bring you home." I remember around midnight hearing the tick-tocking of some big clock; I did not know it was midnight, but slowly

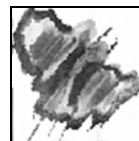
figured out by the fireworks sounds in the air, and the heightened cheering, that the 21st century had arrived. Whatever that was. I decided to follow the music and prayed that it would indeed bring me home. I had nothing else left to do.



To be continued in *Cenacle* / 51-52 / Winter 2004



JUDITH HAGGAI



Afraid to Call

tried to dial (afraid to call) so i willed it to be busy
and i tried to re-dial
but afraid to call, it was a dial tone of no one home

me, afraid to call?
afraid to hear that you're lying in bed
unable to lift your head
or shave your hair
while chemo knocks your roots off

me, afraid to pass on
the wishes, the kisses, the messages
that sit collecting in my pockets
my mind filled with tones and blushes
of those who trust me to call

afraid to call & it's not easy
yet, i admit when i think of you
i start to shake

Fast Blush Means Yes

trail of clothes
fast blush means yes
tearing off curtains
turning up music
slow peel of inhibitions
open eyed inquiry
do you wanna make a moment with me?

let's undo the seconds
caress the futon
undress in closest closet time
listen how life has chosen us
come on baby
let's listen to life

Ballerina Chaplin

teetering grace
balanced on a pinhead
reciting tao te ching
tongue in cheek
fakir nailed and tied

batik for brains
patchouli sense
roller coaster culture queen
been there, done that scene
twisted open-ender

a Ballerina Chaplin
wizardly cool
impressionist, pointilist
between dotted speech
she has a lot to teach

turn the key
she'll rotate
breathing deep
of life and farce
vaudevillian jubilee
hot sauced invariably
icon of taste

That you, hiding in the crocus?

Carpet of sand-blown rocks
Is that you, hiding in the rubble?
The smell of ancient horses
ground underfoot, in the midst of markets

Cracked soil, parched from long haul home
Is that you, hiding in a bedouin bag?
The gathering of songs, all day sounds
flown on the autumn wind, sown fields longing

Hint of afternoon changes, clouds move close
Is that you, drifting in sky's glyphs?
The separation of continents, worlds apart
letting loose rumours of no return

Daydreams of spring upheaval
Is that you, hiding in the crocus?
peeking in sudden child-like surprise
daring to appear amongst broken bones

Gone Now

you've gone now
the chance is over
the meetings on the way
the looks of intention
the perhaps of a touch
the incidence of excitement
the fantasy of one day

you've gone now
your thick smile
your strong shoulders
your brush and your scent
your meaningful engagement
your thighs
your orchid bearing hands

you've gone now
your flash red pick-up
your open invitations
your powerful suggestions
your obvious patience
your cell-phone hesitation
your size, your eyes

you're gone now

Ode to the Madmen I Have Known

knew you
to climb the ivory tower
& rescue the maiden Truth

i watched you
scale impossible landslides
to pick a delicate bloom

i heard you
caress the ears of idiots
resurrect their ashen brains

i saw you
leap into the swirling drain
and jump back out again

you, a madman, among fools
a weeper amongst tears
a visionary mountaineer

i loved to watch
spirit expanded, humour encompassed
soul embraced madness

you, a multitude of madmen
a line-up of straight-jackets
a metal cup banging on bars

you, blurred at the edges
but noisy beyond barriers
escaping from houdini who-dun-its

this ode is to you
and all the madmen
you've made me see

RAYMOND SOULARD, JR.



New Period

*"Nobody needs to go anywhere else.
We are all, if we only knew it, already there."
—Aldous Huxley, *Island*, 1962.*

Nobody needs to go anywhere else. We are all, if we only knew it, already there.

Nobody needs to wear a wrist of named moments. There are no names, for moments, for trees, none for human souls either.

We are home, right now & forever. We move from familiar room to familiar room, unceasingly.

I know every person & each of them knows me. How couldn't this be true? Very little separates one from another—why do I underestimate our similarities & misunderstand our differences?

But this goes so much further. molecules & supernovas. particles & waves. birch trees & old folk songs. incantations & incandescence.

listen! the universe is shifting
right now!

My father told me when I was younger & cleaner to pray, in the deeps of a crisis, to his deceased mother & to Godd, said when I'd been a tiny soul & sick, he'd done this, and I wonder how many other times he'd done this, perhaps when as a young man he'd gone to New York to become a famous singer, & hadn't, perhaps tonight, right now, when we haven't seen each other in years.

So I pray that he's alive, that I see him again; for myself, just a succession of black pens, on fire, no more.

Nobody needs to go anywhere else. We are all, if we knew it, already there.

Let me tell you the news of the world: the wind is tapping the leaves above my head, perhaps whispering small endearments, perhaps rocking each leaf toward a gentler, easier sleep on this muggy night. The sky is a black worn almost to grey, nay a single star in view. Under my feet, beneath a little brick, a little cement, earth, soil, live floor, live foundation, starship propelling through black, dotted night.

We are there. We are arriving evermore all the time.

Godd above & below. Godd & the air, alright, Godd & the continual arrival there, here,

listen! the universe is still shifting!

A confession: for many weeks now I have been digging myself up & replanting myself elsewhere. Looking for more minutes of sun, more available water, better air currents, better energies.

Again & again.

I could not grow & I did not stay. My plans for success became more complicated & more foolish.

You see, I realize tonight that I never really moved, that I've been here all along. Oh, to be certain I've been shaking leaves, roots, the very stuff I'm planted in, there's a mess around me now.

No matter: all will be well. The earth in which I am rooted is profoundly alive & taking me along as it travels.

My pen, too, is quivering & ready, time for it to carry on, too.

Come again to ZombieTown, Carnal Street, Rohm Tech steps, and deeper into my confession, telling, singing, so much story to come, deeper into my confession:

summertime, & the living's easy, & so's the dying, listen:

in the allnight of fullmoon field of burning dew, amongst the drums crackling with new worlds, floating, bonfires & psychedelia, brothers wet & dancing, crackling with new world, demons dancing too, flinging freakish hand-prayers at the peaking bonfires, demons in skirts and, further along, demons in none, what happened, tell us do!

poor soulard died, gone daddy, gone momma, goodbye, near Canada, nearer Heaven, listen:

we were his incandescent lovers, we went begging for the story, it was now morning, day, later, cigarette butts, fullmoon gone, we found tired trippers & stained lambs, & janitors too, motley spangled incongruous, sweeping up old winds and:

poor soulard died, we found no body, he was now just our collective dream, listen:

then a mellow blonde spirit arrived, with half a sack of truth and she said "i didn't know his name but he left with the fullmoon, we talked about the truth, he gave me what he had left, he told me he was 34, & i saw him leave with the fullmoon," she said & we knew:

poor Soulard died, his own way, left us with an urge, to recall last conversations & what was it he said about Godd but listen:

we returned to his latest friend, exhausted on a Harley, told us "Soulard left me last night to find acid, wife & Godd, took a candle & a bright sprig, took his bag of truth, not much left, I knew he was going to die, as he went into the darkness, i knew i couldn't help him find acid, wife & Godd . . .

"poor soulard died while i prayed & waited," obla-da, listen!

another fullmoon night, now, a thousand soulards scattered throughout our dreams, another fullmoon night, a thousand laughing soulards scattered throughout our dreams, not the least dead, not the, least dead, least dead, listen:

he tells us, "i was 17 & died, i was 34 & died, here i am," tells us, "i watched my life burn down in the fullmoon," tells us, "i want a new sack for new truths," & he leaves us then, laughing, laughter the most dangerous fire of all, he had died laughing & burning, laughing, burning, again, & again, listen!:

we still see him around, we're still waiting for him to come back to us for good, we give him advice while he listens & lights matches, he's laughing again, laughter fat with burning dew, we know he lives, again, & we pray for him.

Begin, incandescence. Begin, chant, chant, begin, blood of ink, blood of moment, begin, set words on fire & watch the ink dance, watch the blood crackle.

Trees, & certainty. Trees, calmness, fecund green, stars above, listen more closely. Trees, & certainty. I've seen it time & again.

My father steered our rattling old yellow station wagon near the mountain road's edge, near the least bit of railing imaginable, pointed to the sky, there it is! he'd say—no longer the tired 3 jobs & 70 hours a week man—now he was prophet, now he shined, his dark eyes focused, calm hunger, on that pinkening sunset, those incandescent clouds, now the troubles of fathering a brood of broken beings, now the unknowable places his wife, once proud & tight, the places this girl had gone, how she'd become the brooding face sitting beside him—oh they were all gone as he told us to look at those clouds at that sunset—can anyone tell me no? could any drinking man in this anonymous Boston bar tell me no my father wasn't prophet, wasn't become pure eye when we sat many years ago crowded in that old yellow wagon on that mountain road—no, I guess not—

Words, weightless, magic. Say again: magic. Under the noise, a secret, truer music. Pages are the wooden night blown churches of words of magic . . . Say again: magic. Say again: music. Again: music.

Blood keeping the body roused to life, alive to need, but blood not enough, blood not philosopher, blood not minister.

Push for the noise inside starshine, boy. Push for the music embedded in the ether.

Are you growling angel enough for the rawness of every moment, for the newly sharpening teeth of Now-Here? Here is glistening readiness, here is spiritus, simulacre, sky, a pressing horizon on all sides filled with empty, burning sepulchers, there is eagerness to help you break through completely, to help you reinvent & reinvent & reinvent & reinvent—

What bar? On what street? Can you really prove your claim? Are there witnesses? You ordered one drink & in minutes you'll be gone. \$2.95 plus a quarter tip—lesser & lesser—stop deciding you're there, in that anonymous Boston bar—whether or not it's true—it doesn't matter—you're home as well there as the rainy night outside—or any other bar you might find yourself in—but it doesn't matter—what matters is mind in motion but calm, body tense & tuned sharply to the constant growth & entropy everywhere—soul liquid, restless & fluid—a story coming here, soon, I've decided, now, really, but something else—listen!

something to tell about desire & music, words & magic, the undenoted, the underconfessed, & about home, home manifest in vibrations, light, flesh

Not a story, not a song, but begin. Begin, incandescence.

Not a train, rumbling here, but get on & ride, on & ride, not a story, but begin, get on & ride. Begin, incandescence.

Neither blue clouds over empty football fields, begin, nor tingling pinkcheeked yesterdays, but pray, begin, incandescence, but pray, now, resurrection, now

The desolation trees in their smiling Buddha-hoods, empty & invisible, & Bickford's nearby serving begin, pray, now, begin, serving "Pancakes & Family Fare," hmm, desolation trees in their smiling, hmm, join in, now, pay attention, here & now, brothers & sisters

Not on a train, passing over a river, rippling diamond motes, blue clouds & Buddha-hooded trees, resurrection, now, & thinking: Time is my own soul inside my own fist; freedom is what I must enact; love is blood, love, unnecessary, is; and Art speaks all Creation in a tall horizonless monologue, and how many horizonless monologues are there right now, today in the thin years, how many thin years are there left before the feast, are they really thin, come on, turn on. tune in! drop——

New Period. Pray for him. Resurrection, Now. Heal the Future. Heal Your Future.

Doors in the sky, are you ready to fly?

Every soul, particles & waves, no borders, say yes finally,
won't you?

No tears, no time, just sound & light, no holding still, the
vibrations won't stop!

Dreams, no maps, now, resurrection, join in! let's play louder!

Nothing at All. Everything at Once. Here & Now. Rhythm &
lights.

New Period. Kin to empty streets lined by empty building above
which UFOs hover & study, tractor trailers speed along, swirling to
avoid the occasional acid-dancer, trees & bushes & mosquitoes &
fierce artisan spiders lit up by temporary electrification, Nature will
neither rise nor fall, merely oncome continuously.

New Period. Kin to vast field lit by bonfire, its drummers, its
dancers, a romantic but pressing fullmoon, naked chests & bare feet,
now flutes, now guitars, laser beams on hilltop boulders, fullmoon,
lookers for acid, godd, & wife, burning dew, howl, howl, howl, primal
handclaps, drums,
we are already there
we are already there
we are already there

Summer of 1998, Luna T's Cafe, Hartford, Connecticut,
continuing to change, continuing to break away, there is a small
framed notice to be found in each of its several rooms, a list of
instructions entitled "Millennial Artist's Survival Guide" & now a time
to denote the various activities here by way of varied approach to the
items on this list.

"Trade into Ecstasy," mmm, a rainy night at Luna T's bar, Red
Sox on the TV destroying the Anaheim Angels, a weekday night, the
bar crowd not packed but a jovial bunch & what is "Millennial Artist's
Survival Guide" to them muchless "Trade into Ecstasy"?

OK. Go slowly. Can one validly call the bunch drinking at the
bar artists? Lessee. No—let's listen—

One man, blonde, late 30s, grizzled face, lingering muscular
physique of a former athlete is telling his older buddy, dark thinning
hair, cleanshaven, bright, grim eyes "that motherfucker didn't have
the balls to tell me to my face! That cocksucking sonuvabitch sends
me a note in a sealed envelope delivered by his faggot assistant! Do
you hear what I'm saying? No respect. Fifteen ballbusting years at
the grindstone there, taking one pussy raise year after year, listening
to him year after year talk about responsibility & loyalty &
commitment & he hands me my pink slip like that! Tell me different
now! Tell me different!"

His companion grunts, nods, sips, catches the eye of Mr. Bob
the bartender & orders two shots of Jack Daniels whiskey, straight.

A couple of younger fellows are drinking pints of Lite Beer from Miller & watching the ballgame. Arguing every chance they get.

"They got no chance!"

"You don't know that."

"I'm telling you, the Yankees are a team of destiny this year like the '85 Bears. They're gonna win it all. I hate to say it. You know me—I love the Red Sox. But no way. Not this year. The Yankees are gonna win 120 games, brother! You don't argue with that. You can't."

Mr. Bob keeps a piece of his attention to this conversation, knowing what he'd say if he knew these fellows better; but he also watches the one who was fired, waiting for anger to become a cocked fist or a thrown punch; & then there's the old man to worry about. No shouting from him tonight. Only mumbling. Hard to tell if this is better or worse.

"**Woe**" he mumbles, over & over. Sipping, staring, "**woe**" he mumbles. And again: "**Woe.**"

Millennial artists, these? No? I've noticed that for most souls impassioned talk is what they bear by way of artistic activity. Uncomfortable with most manifestations of freedom, they nonetheless can burst out with verbal beauty or vitriol exciting as a wild fountain or a quickening herd of gazelle. Artists, at least of the tongue? For sure. Just listen.

But what about "Trade into Ecstasy"? The giving up of something good for the getting of something great? As far as this goes, the several persons in the barroom are flaring upward, as best alcohol can take them, toward a moment of clarity, a moment of clear-eyed levitation above circumstance—listen—

"I'm telling ya he treated me like dogshit which is the last thing you want to do to anyone in this world. What goes around comes around, yes sir. I've seen it too."

"Sure, sure."

"You keep an eye on him. Don't be surprised if one day you find him dead, choked to death on his own vomit."

"Wouldn't surprise me."

"Red Sox rule!"

"Yeehah!"

"Are they gonna beat the Yankees?"

"Yee hah!"

"You're damned right they are! It's only right. It's our turn! They had theirs!"

"Red Sox rule!"

"We wish to rise with our Lord into the blessed, eternal realms. We wish, we pray. But we sin, and we sin again, and we grow heavier each time and though the Lord's voice itself commandeth us to rise we have become accustomed to our sinking state. We sink not because we are corrupted by this world but because we have weighted ourselves

down upon it, & bespoiled it, & bespoiled ourselves & concluded that any lord who will not raise us up, unrepentant, to a cleansing, renewing Heaven is not such as we will even try to follow. Woe!f Woe! Woe!"

Trading into ecstasy the best they can, into brief nearside experiences of it but at what cost!

Into the bandroom & bearing the same query. Into a very separate room from the barroom, inhabited by persons much closer to collecting the full ecstasy all creatures are due. But not fully there yet.

Rebecca Dorothy Americus, 17 years old, manager of Luna T's Cafe, has just stepped into this room through the door from the barroom.

She's wearing a long black sweater & blue jeans. Her dark brown hair is nearly long enough to rest on the back of her jeans. Her only adornment is the plain aqua-colored bracelet given her by her lover.

Her bright blue eyes take in the scene, & twinkle.

The crowd is younger, huddles together in large, smiling, talkative groups. These are the kids that smoke pot & listen to college radio. They come to Luna T's to talk by day & dance by night. They started when Rebecca began organizing events for them, dancing nights, New Art Nights, & especially because Noisy Children plays here live Fridays & Saturdays. Now the joint is habit for them.

Trade into ecstasy? Trade youth for a handful of blissful nights. Trade the few, somewhat free years for endless talk, unaimed hopes, the comfort of touch amongst your tribe, trade into a kind of ecstasy that yellows into nostalgia, into the artifice of occasional revival, trade into the best one can get while still a ticket is required, the time is set, the fields are lit, nothing too great is lost or sacrificed—

Rebecca nods & smiles.

"Your dad is cool."

"He is."

"Like, where does he hang out? We heard he used to hang out in this room a lot."

"He's busy these days. He's writing a musical."

Everyone smiles & says "cool."

"When will we see it?"

"Is he gonna charge us?"

"Tell him we can't wait!"

Rebecca smiles at all this & departs to a locked doorway behind the stage.

"Trade into Ecstasy," now, descending from the door, is where this matter finally gets somewhere.

Upon a time, Rebecca had come through that door, down a flight of stairs, and into the Cafe's basement, a rough cellar, unfinished,

used for storage because it's waterproof, once in a great while used as a rehearsal space for Noisy Children.

No more.

The stairs are now a grassy hill at the top of a natural amphitheatre; the range of the place seems impossible because it appears to be unlimited.

The time is now, then, never. The place is here, but has no name.

Rebecca contrived the form of this place from several nubs of inspiration, standing, watching, from its beginning, top of the hill, contrived it from stories she knows of the obscure but legendary 1960s poet David Time & his artistic communal experiments in New Hampshire, from her lover's recent cataclysmic experiences up in the northern Vermont woods amongst trees & psychedelic dancers, from her own desire to make Luna T's Cafe different, range it from bar to delight to infinity. The bar's upstairs, happy the Red Sox are winning; the delight is laughter in the bandroom, the natural excitement of youth; infinity is before her, a place beyond commerce & anticipation.

"Dad?"

"Rebby."

"What do you think about, um, Luna T's basement?"

"It's a storage space. The band tried rehearsing there a few years ago."

"It can be more."

"Yes."

"I have some ideas."

"Yes."

"Don't you want to hear them?"

"Not to give you permission."

"Oh."

"You can do whatever you like there."

"Oh."

"Do you want to make it into a dance place? For, what is it? All-night raves?"

Rich tries to leave his bed, now that he's managed to clothe himself beneath the covers. The hand of his blonde wife Franny objects, however.

"I wanna hear what our little girl's up to," her sleepy voice insists.

In reply to that, Rebecca leaps into Rich's arms & he sets her up between Franny & himself. Then he gets her artpad & pencil that still sit on the rocking chair next to the bed.

Not having said good morning yet, Franny & Rebecca hug for a long time. They both know the miracle of Franny being here at all. Then they gangirlhug Rich. He laughs & says "I guess you haven't outgrown all this stuff, have you?"

Now Rebecca is showing them her pictures. One shows the very kind of natural grassy amphitheatre that Rebecca is standing at the

top of now, remembering all this. The drawing depicts a great bonfire in the center of the amphitheatre's bowl, and a blur of dancers around it and a huddle of drummers too, many bongos. In the sky, a fullmoon.

"This is what Ray told me it was like up in Vermont the night he died," Rebbly explains. Not one to usually feel much fear in her life, talking about her lover's death & resurrection scares her.

"He still loves you, Reb," Franny whispers, tightening her draping around Rebecca's shoulders. "He hasn't gone anywhere."

She's silent for a moment. "I know. But that night means so much to him." She catches herself. Be here now, she thinks. Your dad is well & next to you, & he married Franny! He really did it! She doesn't have to leave anymore because he doesn't know what to do about her!

She flips to the next picture which shows Noisy Children rocking unto blur where the bonfire had been in the first picture.

"Where's the fire? Where are all the drummers?" demands Rich, smiling.

Reb looks at him hard for a few moments. He embraces her gaze, sweetens it with his own.

"I thought that Noisy Children, maybe just once, could do your new musical here. But something was missing. I mean, a lot of what they did happened in that commune building. So I thought about it & then drew this—"

She turns another page & the amphitheatre & the field stretching away from it are now merged with some of the Cornish, New Hampshire commune building where in 1968 & 1969 David Time & his friends engaged in their artistic & psychedelic experiments. Noisy Children play among the building's scattered pieces.

"Do you like it, Dad?"

"The basement's not this big! What are you thinking?"

"We can, um, change it."

"Frances, wife, what was I thinking designating this child manager of my business, my sole income & source of all our hopes of stability?"

Frances decides it's her turn to sit in the middle & there's all sorts of jumping & adjusting & giggling while she arranges all this.

"Richard, you knew she'd do something like this. You hoped she would. You're just as proud as punch of her!" Franny is sitting on Rich's lap with her legs in Rebecca's possession.

Rich's returning smile contracts. "Rebecca, I—" he stops. No need to tell. She's 17, she's perfect. I'm unfairly lucky. I don't want to wake up. If there's no story here, I don't care anymore.

Rebecca, I. You're my dream-child. You're proof I've not failed. You're bright & happy & the most restless artist I've ever seen. I could die here & now & you & Franny would carry on & not forget me but you would carry on, I know this finally. You're my proof that good exists. You're my argument for doing that good.

"Yes."

"You'll play there?"

"Yes to the whole thing. Just make sure you store my box of notebooks somewhere safe."

"Dad! Your notebooks are in my office in a trunk!"

"Oh. Franny, let me just say that Cecile never did things like this when he was manager."

"And what did he do?"

"He drank & played drums."

Her dad wouldn't help her, though. She tried every way she could but he just said "I trust you" or "I'm just a musician, miss, don't know nothin' bout no live painting,"

Live painting. He gave her a name for it, this doing, anyway. Of course Godd the little pink bear was involved. Of course.

"Godd?"

"I'm here."

"I have an idea for the, um, Goddpink."

"Should we use it to save the world? We could."

"The world is in danger?"

"No. Of course not. Not really. Stop tricking me! I'm your lord & I command it!"

"Can I tell my idea?"

"Go ahead."

Rebecca & Godd the little pink bear sitting at the far corner stools of Luna T's bar. Godd drinking Harp Lager of Ireland, Rebecca her milk.

Luna T's was already coated with Goddpink, sacred protecting stuff that was Godd's promise that this place would not burn down nor go away. But what else could Goddpink do? Reb had been wondering.

"I want to make the basement much bigger & have it be mostly, um, fields & forest."

"I can do that right now for you. I am Goddpink, remember"

"No! I want to do it myself, you see. Paint it live. All the trees. The grass. The sky. If you let me, I'll use the Goddpink to do this."

"Can I ask you a question?"

"Sure. Anything."

"Don't you like beer?"

"It's OK. I like milk better."

"I see that. And acid."

"Yes." Laughs. "Milk & LSD."

She now stands, still, at the top of the hill above her creation. Live painting, her dad had called it, & he was right. As real as vision could be, but still vision, malleable, dependent in a way real grass & trees & such are not. She extended into this field & beyond as much as she did into her canvas paintings & notebook drawings.

But the work was done. She'd spent days mastering the techniques of live painting, of using Goddpink.

Potent. Omnipotent, nearly. Just a dab at the tip of her brush. She remembered laughing to herself, thinking, "not a dab. A tab. A tab of Godd."

The ampitheatre & its field & the forest beyond ran for miles, to the far edges of downtown Hartford. It occupied space also taken up by common cellars & storage rooms & basement apartments & underground parking garages but it was beyond the vision of the people passing through most of these places who'd never learned how to see very high or very deep. Had they known to look, to engage their own seeing faculties fully, the trees & grass around them would be as clearly visible as the fullmoon above that field, always above that field, the one most people only allow themselves to see once a month.

Rebecca worked on this painting for days, deciding to trip while doing it since her lover had sung so beautifully about writing on psychedelics. And David Time's experiments, too.

She'd had to work with contour & depth, with light & air in greater ways than she'd done on canvas. Before starting, she'd gone into the cemetery near her home & consulted the trees & grass & light & air there, walking around, touching, listening, taking in growth & decay, constant growth & decay, & incredible calmness amidst growth & decay.

Her brush responded to what she visualized but was reluctant to change much once it existed. Hence a patch of pink grass down there in the ampitheatre bowl and a pair of very human looking trees twined carnally around each other at the near-side of the woods.

She had to learn to manipulate, then, mind's vision to paintbrush's manifestation.

"Godd, did you know that the word psychedelic means 'mind-manifesting'? That's what I like doing, isn't it? That's what I liked better when I was tripping. It's like I was getting my whole self ready so I could manifest the best I can."

"Nearly there, child. You're nearly there."

Slow but fluid was how it went. Trusting her vision, learning to steer, she created.

So, "Trade into Ecstasy"? Oh yes. Surely. Well, unlike her paintings, this one wasn't meant to be seen from without but entered, participated in. Shouts, sadness, leaping, joy, so much would come once she opened up the door. This was different for her, to share her art in this way. It had been her idea, of course, but now she felt almost daunted.

"Godd, I'm giving them back 1968. Early April; really early April."

"Yes."

"Will it be OK?"

"I don't know."

"Someone said to me once 'there are no accidents.' Is that true?"

"Yes. How could it be otherwise?"

"But doesn't that mean everything's predestined?"

"No."

Rebecca hadn't pushed it. Why antagonize Godd?

Still, here she stood. Done but for the people to come. Trade into Ecstasy? OK, here goes—

"Tell me what it was like."

"Again? Are you sure?"

"Yes, Ray. Tell me. Show me. Be here with me right now & we'll walk around to all the places where things happened."

"You were doing fine without me."

"No. I wasn't. We're supposed to be together right now. I need you."

"You're losing confidence about us, aren't you?"

Small voice, "yes."

"It doesn't have to be like this."

"Am I going to lose you? Has what happened here changed things?"

"Of course it changed things! I died, Rebecca. That night I was at my own funeral & wake. But then I was reborn, all in one night. A tab and a half of acid."

"Tab & a half of Godd."

"Yes! That's it"

"So everything changed?"

"Everything ended. And then some things resumed & some didn't & some things were brand new."

"Do you love me like before?"

"I love you enough to let you go a little bit."

"What do you mean?"

I'm now standing beside her. I motion her to sit. Down below, the dancers around the bonfire leap & writhe, the many drummers coalesce into & then out of many kinds of beats. Scattered around the hill are figures, standing, sitting, smoking. Some carry flashlights.

Rebecca smiles at me.

"Black ink, not Goddpink," I explain.

Godd the little pink bear appears long enough to say, "What's the difference, young man? None!"

Rebecca looks at me, waiting. I hold out my arms but still she hesitates.

"Rebecca, I love you. You can't know how much I do."

"I love you, too. Why has it gotten hard?"

"Because this is the New Period. Things are still settling. It'll take awhile."

Now we embrace. Two clouds grazing particles, two toddlers imitating grownups, two youths trying not to giggle, two parted lovers dipping anew in their conjoined waters.

"Tell the Truth" is the second item on the list & return to the barroom & learn.

The after-work crowd has stayed on later than usual because it's September 8, 1998 & the TV is showing an event briefly lighting societal skies. A baseball game on TV. No, not the Red Sox—they'd already beaten the Yankees today & were still holding onto their wild-card spot.

No—American eyes focused on a monumental game in St. Louis, Missouri, famous for the Gashouse Gang & Stan Musial. Cardinal Mark McGuire about to hit his 62nd home run of the season, a new record, the old mark 61 set 37 years ago.

"Hit one out, baby!"

"You can do it! I've got ten bucks on him doing it tonight!"

"If he doesn't choke."

"Choke? You wish. He's hit more in the past two weeks than all the weeks before!"

"What're you talking about? He's hit, what? 12, 15?"

"I mean in any other two-week period!"

"You made that up!"

"They said it on TV while you were gone taking a piss!"

Mr. Bob sidles up to them with two fresh pints & the *Hartford Courant's* sports section. The two men grab it & argue on.

On his second at-bat, McGuire belts one just long enough to clear the fence for a home run. People around the nation cheer this moment. It's clean-cut. It hurts no one. The man in the spotlight is a father, a good teamplayer, an articulate hero but neither intellectual-brainy nor working-class embittered. Besides, those in the nation who would protest giving this moment any importance aren't watching. Their loss.

"You won your bet. Buy us all a round!"

"Did I promise anyone a round if I won?"

"See what wealth does to a man? Goes right to his head!"

Mr. Bob silences the argument by announcing a free round on the bar in celebration of Mark McGuire, American hero. The drinkers raise their glasses and within half an hour most have gone home.

On his second at-bat, McGuire belts one just long enough to clear the back fence Rebecca I love you can't know how much I do Frances decides it's her turn to sit in the middle & the crowd cheers trade into ecstasy poor soulard died his own way left us with an urge blood not philosopher blood not minister Mark McGuire a large muscled redhaired man a good American a good American

Mr. Bob silences the argument by tossing the two drunken baseball fans out on their asses while giving everyone else in the place a free drink to celebrate the good American's amazing feat.

Break it down, tell the truth, break it down a man contains a thousand living moments right now, a thousand thousand, a thousand million

Break it down, tell the truth

Tell the truth, break it down

Mark McGuire points at the sky then his heart hugs his son then his teammates credits Godd cheers the unknowable smiles and smiles 62nd home run it means something maybe all America cheers it means more than something break it down tell the truth break it down tell the truth

What else more less?

Mark McGuire is a big man who knows his duty and bears his pains invisibly & his heroes proudly picks up his son dressed like him & they exchange words now he's pointed at the sky then his heart hugged his son then his teammates credited Godd & cheered the unknowable it's Sept 8, 1998 time doesn't really exist much less bear a real name

"Can we come back & drink?"

Mr. Bob looks at me, amused

Sure Sure

"Do we still get our free round?"

yah yah

"I've never tossed anyone out before" Mr. Bob quips to me.

"Sorry"

"No. It was OK."

Shit. Now I've done it. I decide to go into the bandroom & vow to cause less trouble.

Here I find a happy sight. My dear friend Jim Reality III is sitting at a table, enveloped in a sweet guitar jam. Some of the kids are sitting nearby, rapt, smiling.

Tell the truth? Here it is. I skulk to the little table neath the front window & try to listen invisibly.

Someone quietly takes a seat at the table next to mine. I can feel female presence though my eyes are closed & I'm trying to ease into something more comfortable.

Jim's music is almost always filled with bright high skittering notes, swirls of musical stars, a sense of floating, not a dis-embodiment but a re-embodiment in lights not ligaments, vibrations not threads.

Perhaps not so much tell the truth as become the truth, be the truth, skin as stars, bones as notes.

Re-embodiment.

"Say, guy." Now Jim is standing nearby, holding his guitar in one hand and a just emptied beer mug in the other. Rebecca is the girl who is sitting at the next table, smiling at me.

"Hi, Jim. Hi, Beckah."

"What's news?"

"Your playing was great. It made me think about re-embodiment."

Jim's blue-grey eyes twinkle.

"Your music manifests the truth, here & now, palpable. I was thinking that it's not like telling the truth but like being the truth."

"Yes."

Rebecca gets a chair for Jim & sits in the empty chair across from mine. She's silent, smiling, watching me. Sometimes this is her way. She becomes like a tree in the wind, rustling quietly, very aware, but my tree, very much mine.

Jim returns with a full mug of Guinness. Sips exuberantly. "Thirsty" he explains, bemused.

I look at Rebecca with her own level of tree-awareness. She seeks my hand.

"Does Jim know about our project in the basement?"

"No," she says. Though the touch of her hand is light, she's crawling beneath my clothes, a kiss, now scattering into many, loving me, raising me.

Jim looks at me with a touch of impatience for something. "Would you like to join me in my van?"

Rebecca nods at me. "Bring him afterward," she says. I notice she's relinquished my hand but the scattering kisses are not diminishing.

Something . . . something . . . yes . . . I recall tired, angry, frustrated nights walking home to my ZombieTown hovel, passing now too quickly through the sacred cemetery, but, near its other side, suddenly stop, turn back, engage with real truth this time the stars, moon, trees, grass, quiet, potent spirits, love them, aloud, arms offered, love them, they are good, love them, love them, love her

I hold her like a naked body in full sunshine. I hold her, mouth in the ocean, eyes among the stars, crumpled need finding the strong, quiet tree

"Thank you," she says, wet with my mouth and words, embraced into brighter brightness

Yes. Thank you.

Jim's van is slim & blue, parked in a shadowy far corner of the lot. We settle into the front seats & he carefully rolls a joint—I hand him a cassette containing a Grateful Dead concert from 1972.

The night is mild, coaxing. The air is soft, watery though not humid. The music rolls through psychedelic open doors.

I think Jim will ask about the basement but he doesn't. He is calm, utterly present, the music & air & joint & my company comprise his world. He's a big man full of ease, of the potency of being fully here & now. I relax. All is well.

We begin elsewhere, far away, long ago, & we end elsewhere, far away, beyond known time

We end here & now because there is no elsewhere there is no time

We perpetually begin & end

We are nowhere

We are now-here

Calm

We are all, if we only knew it, already there—

“That’s a good one, man. Hundred Year Hall in Germany. ‘72.”

“Yah, but I miss Mickey Hart in the mix.”

“He’s there.”

“You know what I mean.”

“He’s there!”

I flinch & try to decide what to swallow, what to hide, try not to get in Jim’s way as he’s—

not moving.

“Jim, is it cool?”

It must be, though he says nothing, because he says nothing, as a couple of the kids from the bandroom climb into the van & onto the long seat behind ours. They pull the sliding door shut, smiling, saying “hi.”

So I first observe that Jim has followers. More than just me & the other old folk around Luna T’s. Twas inevitable.

A fat joint is rolled up & goes around. For awhile, noone talks. My mind doesn’t even slow but the weed helps to calm some.

What is building up here? I think. Where is it heading? More & more, there’s something at stake even more important than this story. Something is being constructed through the dismantling of something else. Sacrifice. Awareness. Gain. Loss. I am no longer invisible here.

No longer invisible here. Become a seed, growing now, in a field I’ve long known, long farmed, but now farmer & farmed, soil & sunshine, I am writing each of these words, each word is writing me—

The joint goes around & the van floats within, inside a sustained guitar note of marijuana smoke

Legalize Everything! someone, stoned, once yelled

& I am thinking about the phrase ‘The only permanence is change’ & I say aloud to Jim & the young fellows “The only change is permanence” & Jim puffs meditatively ‘pon this pronouncement & one of the young fellows sez “cool” & the other asks me to explain

& I am too fucked to do aught but leave the van at that moment, writing each word, each word writing me, & stand in the parking lot amidst the cars & trees & big buildings of Hartford-where-I-was-born & walk through the parking lot to Reckoning Rd where there are streetlamps but few people & I remember reading in a book that years ago it was a custom for drivers to offer rides to pedestrians they passed & there was once dancing poet in a necktie who always refused & so I am walking along Reckoning Rd without

that necktie & at this moment I can imagine but not know that Jim Reality & those two young fellows have returned to T's bandroom & Rebecca sees I'm not amongst them or perhaps she is already at the Ampitheatre waiting, maybe painting some more & I wish but do not know that she is catching up to me on my walk past darkened bars, dry cleaners & fastfood joints on Reckoning Rd—

“Are you OK?”

“Rebecca, I am writing this”

“Yes”

“And it’s writing me”

“Yes”

“And I am both here, alone, walking down Reckoning Rd, imagining I’m talking to you, & back in my ZombieTown hovel at my desk writing along to very old very present Grateful Dead music”

“Yes!”

“& for days I have grappled with my own intentions & wondered if I’m finally fallen off the beam”

“ ”

“But Amante exhorts me ‘onward!’ on the phone & Brannon sends me lovely pictures & Ciccone is young, unbroken & writing fierce, loving poems about Sinatra & death, & Burke tells me to remember the candle & its wax that melts but then hardens again & Shorette will find Godd by whatever means necessary & Dillon leaves a story undone for 3 years until an unanswered question is resolved & Emerson will find Godd by whatever means necessary & I love them all even the ones I’ve lost & my family & enemies & & & & & & &”

We are sitting on a hill of the Ampitheatre & there is laughter everywhere & I remember how much I laughed the night I died laughed for hours because the drumming & other music was terribly, hugely funny & I heard others laughing & the ampitheatre did shortshop to second to first echo numbers on our flaming joynoses Rebecca I have to write me writing this story writing me there isn't a choice anymore tell the truth tell the truth tell the truth tell the truth

She stands & we begin to walk down the hill & I fall down tears & pathos & she puts her arms under my knees & neck & carries me down the hill the fire the laughter the drums & many dancers the fullmoon no promise the fullmoon manifestation be here now be here now! & my love carries me because that's what must happen & then the dancers carry both of us & the drummers never stop not for a moment as the dancers carry us inside the fire where the laughter makes its home jewels & couches of dotted aether & here we stay until tick! & there is agreement: onward! onward! onward!

Onward: “learn to steer” & pull up a stool at Luna T’s bar & here’s Mr. Bob the bartender, white shirt & black bowtie, black vest & splatter pattern apron, short pepper-grey hair & square-framed spectacles, wiping the bit of bar before you, coaster set down & “Whats yours, Bud?” friendliness enough to beget much more.

& you order, say, a pint of Pete's Wicked Ale, good Northwestern U.S. brew, & he turns to me not so much querying "what kind of brew?" as "one pint or two?" & you can see that he likes me, that he's used to me, that he even depends on me, or more accurately needs me, in some obscure way. I comprise one part of his realm, I am approved of, I am loved, you think, & perhaps wish the same for yourself but as for tonight:

"learn to steer" & you listen to me elaborate

"well, my idea of it came more or less from Ken Kesey & the Merry Pranksters back in the '60s, an idea among them about functioning under acid, taking your trip into the world with some intention & pursuing that intention so sometimes I would trip & go into the city, learning to steer, & I would want to write something good, learning to steer, & it would work out well sometimes & I thought the concept can be applied to more than acid trips there are lots of situations when you have to control & direct energy & intention, learn to steer—"

"like what" you ask, wondering how many pints of beer you're into this night.

"exactly!" i say, "you don't know how many beers you've had but you're not upset, & your night is rolling along. that's Mr. Bob for you, he keeps an eye on you and your glass so, i guess in a sense, you don't have to worry about either one, learn to steer, learn to—"

"but wait" you say "don't we all steer all the time?"

"not very well! the barman that ignores you, standing down the other end of the bar, rapping with some slitskirt piece, he's not steering well, displaying his toothy grin for her, keeping you dry. the amateur scribbler who reasons that his colleagues will tell him what he's doing wrong in his verse & how to fix it. the band up on stage playing the same set of songs every night in the same way tho their location has changed & the night is a fresh one."

you are several more beers into this than you'd planned to be & this fellow, while nice, seems slightly daft

"yes i am ok but listen to the old man & watch our barman friend here"—

"These days ring with finality. Each hour prophesizes the dwindling remainder. Doth not thy very bed shudder with the foreboding of its demise?"

"No thing shall survive this end-time. Are ye soul or are ye thing? Are ye readying soul among readying souls or are ye thing coming to thy annihilation among—"

"Shut the fuck up!" A shaky, smashed hairy truck driver yells. "I hear your preacher-talk here every night & it—"

"Singular manifestation of time-bespeckled iniquity!" Dr. Arnold T. Knickerbocker also deeply drunken, brandishes his walking cane & swings it around. The truck driver kicks back his stool, ready to take on this ancient personage.

“Devout sinner! Rattling through thy bones is the black rapture of the coming end! I am a healer of souls and men. You will not want for care from the pain I— ”

Of course no fight occurs. Mr. Bob and I hustle the driver out the door, again, him yelling “I just wanted to drink! I didn’t want no goddamned sermon! My ex-wife used to keep Jerry Falwell preaching on the TV while I was trying to lay her! Throw out the old man! He threatened me!” & his sad face now outside, hadn’t really wanted to fight, just knock the old man down once to shut him the fuck up but not really hurt him come on man let me in & soon

I take you & our drinks into the bandroom hoping we’ll learn more in there

& you wonder not when you let go of the wheel but when you stopped caring—

And someone asks me again about the sentiment that ‘the only change is permanence,’ an honest query, a need that I throw in with the evolution happening here & I’m not sure what to say but learn to steer learn to steer OK I’ll have at it

if we’re going to make it, i say, we have to acknowledge our eternal kinship from molecule to supernova. the cosmos has neither beginning nor end but a continuity that reductionist thinking calls time. we belong as much to forever as we do to right now & all that was or will be is rightfully, inarguably ours. so too with space. we are stardust. stardust is ours. we belong to all of the cosmos as much as it belongs to us.

‘Be Here Now’ could be more vastly understood as ‘Be Everywhere Always’ & less an exhortation than a statement of truth. There is no choice.

A pretty girl of about 19 asks me a question while I imagine her shorn of garment, skin a blossoming field of loving dew, enjoying a tongue-dance Rebecca & I lead from opposite ends of her fullness, her tightness. We invite many tongues to join us.

Her blue eyes droop when I fail to answer her. So I walk over to her and say “I was just thinking how much more love you deserve, & how much more you have to give.”

She repeats her question as a kind of self-defense. “I don’t know how to be everywhere always.” A soft whisper. Agreement with what I said. Shyness.

This is stumbling. I am answering questions by introducing new ideas & probably defeating one decent notion after another by failing to fully explain any of them.

I start again. “Imagine a long journey to a faraway place days & miles off. Imagine arriving the moment you begin. Imagine never really leaving the first place.

“We carry all places & all times around with us!” Worn out, paradoxes studded with riddles.

I stop again. I've failed to steer. "Godd is the golden flower before us, whose petals we see through without ever knowing this," I conclude, sadly, quietly.

A large figure appears near me with a reassuring hand on my shoulder. "All is not as it seems," Jim Reality explains, finishing my broken speech.

I stand up, deciding. I look at the group of kids before me, at Jim, Rebecca, at the unnamed newcomer I'd brought in here, & say, "Let's carry this forward. It's time."

Rebecca walks beside me as the group of us head for the basement, for the Ampitheatre.

"Are you OK?" Beckah asks me, tho she knows I'm not.

"Rebecca, there's more at stake here than a story or even a world. I am oscillating more & more wildly & can't seem to stop. When I am here with you, I want to take this new period far deeper into itself. When I am back in my own world, I often feel nearly dead.

"But I died already. Twice. & this last time was profoundly good & very meaningful. So I have to explore it more & understand better what happened, how I died & was reborn that night & was saved from my own self-destruction, too."

I stop. Despite all she loves me. She hangs on me. She wants to enter the Ampitheatre of my soul & I wonder if that's possible.

Open the door to basement & I enter onto the hill. Reb & I wait to see if everyone will make it in alright. They all do. They all see an ampitheatre before them, open field & woods beyond that. They're all Beyond the Basement.

We scatter at this point. No harm will come here to anyone. The door behind us is visible & unlocked.

Rebecca & I walk down the hill toward the huge bonfire & its crowd of drummers & dancers but then my impulse leads us away, down the field some ways to approximately the place where I spent most of the night of my funeral & wake.

We sit together in the grass.

"Should we trip?" she asks, shyly. I nod & she produces two capsules we feed each other. We have about an hour before the LSD shows its effects.

There is simply love here, between you & me. We sit facing each other, the fullmoon lighting your face. Your eyes are a deep, bright blue & I say

"Your eyes are beautiful"

& your face is soft & open, suffused with wisdom & trust, a place I trust, soft & steady & I say

"I trust your face"

& I lean toward you, you toward me & I hold your long brown hair, its waves & shimmers & curls, I bring you closer so I can kiss your head & float with your hair & I say

"there you are"

& the acid begins to ripple in—has it been an hour?

"Rebecca, you mustn't be scared about us anymore."

"I'll try"

"Do you see me? Here, with me now?"

"Yes."

"There isn't any other way anymore! We don't part from each other anymore."

"But we do, Ray! I can't help you when you're back in your own world. I can't reach you."

"I don't know what to do about that. I spend my days trying to get back here for an hour or two but I can't stay here very long. When I'm not here, I can only think about you & what I hope will happen when I get back here."

We kiss into a final lingering swirl that seems to be ending & try to follow it & it dissipates but something else opens up, a harsh box of music with sky for a lid, fullmoon sky for a lid & the floor beneath us falls away forever such that we are sinking yet rising toward the fullmoon too stretching yet withering now the dried leaves of a brittle November wind now beginning to spin beginning to spin faster like a corkscrew through going upward & downward all the time & I remember for a moment "learn to steer" & this reminds me that the only change is permanence so I slow us down, gradually & the box of harsh music expands & softens until it is no more than the distant line of trees and the steady beat of the many drums around the dancing fire & I will go on kissing Rebecca forever for kissing is what we have always done how can this be how can this be & learning to steer even better I sit up properly & draw her unto my lap & we hug most deeply for hugging is what we have always done & when she stumbles before her tears I know we have to enter the bonfire circle of dancers & drummers & forget about the guidance of these words & dance with everyone we know which is everyone of course & the fire rises & broadens & the drummers increase in numbers and the dancers fling about more wildly & there are faces now shorn anew of their names & cares & I know that my love with that young woman is part of something vast & good & permanent & there is a vacant drum & so I find my place among the drummers tripping hard now eyes seeing inside my own Ampitheatre within my Soul as I continue drumming & fall inside this inner Ampitheatre where I am no longer among drummers dancers & fire but somehow all of them at once & the trees in the forest too watching from afar & I am the fullmoon above from where I descended & now interested in being all at once everywhere always I remove myself from the scene within my Ampitheatre just some & now back in the Ampitheatre beneath Luna T's Cafe I look up at the fullmoon & ascend upward to it as it descends to me & again I leave some of me behind but some I carry forth into the Universe wondering if I can be out in space at the Cosmic Bonfire & it seems I can though spread thusly, most oddly, I cease being grim & laugh most fully, waterfalls, high tide, supernovas, sunshine daydream sunshine daydream sunshine daydream Rebecca is following me everywhere sinking down to the

within's within of my I then now rising up bearing love here we are
cosmic necessity love most beautiful most unnecessary most dark
necessary how are we we are well

we have always been well

when we die we will be well sunshine daydream sunshine
daydream

come along Rebecca we must go to everywhere we don't yet
know that we are not come along Rebecca we are everywhere we
don't have names except to dance better there is no language except
to dance better trip hard trip harder trip harder now

SO GONE

BEYOND

LSD & ABANDONED CARS

FULLMOON EVERYWHERE

where are we not?

I dreamed my sister was dead, definitely, & I was with my
mother, in a silence, a foul silent blackness, not even the leaning
softness of tears.

Like always, no then, no now, she was small

but dead

breathlessly dead

my mother & I were together but no comfort, silence, that's
what I most remember, a frenzied tight silence

New Period. Fullmoon. Constant night. More loneliness, more
understanding. No map, never really lost.

I know what I have to do, Christine. I know you are not dead. I
love you always. I love the fullmoon too.

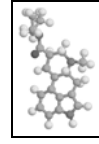
We are raw, wet & open.

It's OK. We're already there.



To be continued in *Cenacle* / 51-52 / Winter 2004

JAY STEVENS



The Politics of Consciousness

[An excerpt from *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream*, 1987]

“The whole goddamn climate changed. Suddenly you were conspirators out to destroy people. I felt like Galileo. I closed my practice and went to Europe. I felt violated.”

That was the way Oscar Janiger remembered the change in mood that began in the summer of 1962. Suddenly LSD was no longer innocuous. It was a dagger pointed at the heart of psychiatry, the next thalidomide, a time bomb that was cheerfully being constructed by deluded members of the profession.

“If you want to know, it was Leary and the others who were ruining what we had worked so hard to build.”

That was Janiger retrospectively laying blame. At the time no one knew where to point the finger. With the exception of some of the Lab Madness boys, who had been a tad bitter when their work was dismissed as passé, things had been proceeding with benign optimism, new recruits swelling the research ranks every week.

In a major city like Los Angeles, it was as easy to go on an LSD trip as it was to visit Disneyland. Interested parties could either contact the growing number of therapists who were using LSD in practice, or they could offer themselves as guinea pigs to any of the dozens of research projects that were under way at places like UCLA. Representative of the first approach was Thelma Moss, a former character actress turned “slick fiction” writer. Moss had heard Aldous Huxley talking about the Other World on a local television show, and before learning of Arthur Chandler and Mortimer Hartman, she had been prepared to search out some of Gordon Wasson’s magic mushrooms in Mexico. Moss made an appointment with Chandler and Hartman, and after deciding on a psychological problem that would focus the sessions (she chose frigidity), she took the first of twenty-three LSD trips.

Moss was not a novice when it came to psychoanalysis. She had been in therapy for years. But she had never really, in her heart of hearts, believed that there was such a thing as the unconscious. LSD convinced her. During one session she suddenly became a legless beggar caught in a desert sandstorm, a scene right out of *King Solomon’s Mines*, except that deep inside herself she heard a voice whispering, *I died here*. Another time she watched her insides explode into flames with such force that she was flung against the wall. It reminded her a little of how emotions sometimes multiplied until

every pore was engulfed, only this was :a vastly more ruthless force: (students of *Kundalini* take note). :What is it,: she kept crying to her therapist, who finally gave her a tranquilizer.

Moss never knew where she would land after she passed through the Door. "Truth and lies and absurdity and grandeur were all mixed together in the psychedelic experience," she wrote. "In an effort to separate them, I would return for the next session, and the next, hoping each time that with this next session the truth would be revealed." It never was. But what did happen was so incredible, so contrary to the slick fiction that was her bread and butter, that she began keeping notes.

The other way to the Other World, the research project route, was exemplified by George Goodman, who is probably better known as the economist and writer Adam Smith. Goodman signed up for a UCLA project and was told by the director, "You are the astronauts of inner space. You are going deeper into the mind than anyone has gone so far, and you will come back to tell us what you found."

One of the things Goodman found was that he could see all "the basic molecules of the universe. . . all the component parts, little building blocks of DNA." He conscientiously drew a picture of what he thought was DNA, but it turned out to be a plastic monomer marketed by Dupont called Delrin. That didn't dampen Goodman's amazement, however, because up until taking the LSD he had had a banker's knowledge of molecules and chemical notation, which is to say he knew absolutely nothing about them.

There was something in the American psyche that craved spiritual adventure, something which writer Peter Mathiessen described as a "deep restlessness." Mathiessen had been a leader of the postwar Parisian expatriate scene, one of the founders of *Paris Review*. But he'd also become involved with the Gurdjieff work and that stirred a yearning that he described this way: "One turns in all directions and sees nothing. Yet one senses that there is a source for this deep restlessness; and the path that leads there is not a path to a strange place, but the path home." In Peru Mathiessen experimented with yagé. Then he hooked up with a "renegade psychiatrist" in New York and started using LSD. "Most were magic shows," he later wrote. "After each—even the bad ones—I seemed to go more lightly on my way, leaving behind old residues of rage and pain."

Mathiessen was fortunate. Whenever his girlfriend took LSD it precipitated a terrifying confrontation with her own death. Since this was a fairly common occurrence for anyone who spent much time in the Other World, it is worth quoting Mathiessen's description of a bad trip:

She started to laugh, and her mouth opened wide and she could not close it; her armor had cracked, and all the night winds of the world went howling through. Turning to me, she saw my flesh dissolve, my head become a skull—the whole night went like that. Yet she later saw that she might free herself by living out the fear of death, the

demoniac sage at one's own helplessness that the drug hallucinations seem to represent, and in that way let go of a life-killing accumulation of defenses. And she accepted the one danger of the mystical search: there was no way back without doing oneself harm. Many paths appear, but once the way is taken, it must be followed to the end.

If people like Mathiessen had a code, it was “there are no casual experiments.”

One of the reasons LSD therapy was booming was because qualms about the drug's safety had been laid to rest in mid-1960, when Sidney Cohen published his findings on adverse reactions. Cohen surveyed a sample of five thousand individuals who had taken LSD twenty-five thousand times. He found an average of 1.8 psychotic episodes per thousand ingestions, 1.2 attempted suicides, and 0.4 completed suicides. “Considering the enormous scope of the psychic responses it induces,” he concluded, “LSD is an astonishingly safe drug.” With the question of safety out of the way, interest then focused on the best way to use mind-expanding drugs. There were two schools of thought: those who saw LSD as a “facilitator” of traditional therapy, be it Freudian or otherwise, and those who followed the Hubbard-Osmond practice of giving huge dosages and trying, through the subtle use of cues, to produce a psychedelic or integrative experience. This became known as *psychedelic* therapy, as opposed to the more mainstream *psycholytic* therapy. It got so astute students of the literature could guess the theoretical orientation of an LSD monograph simply by its title: psycholytic papers had headings like “LSD as a Facilitating Agent in Psychotherapy” or “Resolution and Subsequent Remobilization of Resistance by LSD in Psychotherapy”; whereas psychedelic ones favored things like “LSD; Alcoholism and Transcendence” or “LSD and the New Beginning.”

There were certain constants, of course, set and setting being the most notable. But from there the different techniques diverged rather dramatically. Psycholyticists like Chandler and Hartman took a lot of time, using small dosages, establishing a path to the unconscious—sort of a maintenance road—before any real exploration began. What they tried to do was create a state of conscious dreaming, and the way they did it was by masking the various senses. With the eyes blocked, the mind would begin projecting inner movies, sort of like :a 3-D film tape... being run off in the visual field,: as one therapist described it. Some of these film loops were of actual incidents, forgotten since childhood, but most were composed of that symbolic patois that Freud felt was the true language of the unconscious, of psychic reality rather than objective reality.

The patients, asked to maintain a running commentary on what they were seeing, would report things like: *I'm in a black tunnel . . . there is a grayish light at the end of it. . . I'm moving toward it. . .* There was a moment in one of Thelma Moss's sessions when she came to an abyss. Explore it, the doctor suggested:

As I plummeted down, I felt myself growing smaller and smaller . . . I was becoming a child. . . a very small child. . . a baby. . . I was a baby. I was not remembering being a baby—I was literally a baby. (The conscious part of me realized I was experiencing the phenomena of “age regression,” familiar in hypnosis. But in this case, although I had become a baby, I remained at the same time a grown woman lying on a couch. This was a double state of being.) The leg of the baby that I was (my own adult leg) suddenly jerked into the air and I whimpered in the voice of a little child: “They stuck me with a needle!” Before I could find out who had stuck me with a needle, I was playing with round violet-colored marbles. . . which changed into squares. . . then rectangles. . . which grew long and high and became the four sides of a playpen. I was inside the playpen. My brother was outside it, playing. I whined like a baby: “They let him play outside but I have to stay in here...”

Then the playpen vanished and Moss found herself gazing into a big purple jewel, which became an amethyst pendant hanging from her mother’s neck, which became her mother’s face, purple with rage, and she was shaking someone that turned into a rag doll that turned into Moss.

That was what was at the bottom of that abyss.

No doubt because they were Freudians, Chandler and Hartman elicited a lot of childhood sexual trauma, Oedipus complexes, penis envy, but they also observed elements of the Jungian unconscious, the wise old man archetype, the symbol of evil archetype. Sometimes mythological creatures appeared, dragons and Japanese devil gods. And just as Huxley had written, there was a hellish dimension to the Other World, a Dark Wood that everyone stumbled into eventually. A few passed through to something else and returned convinced that they had looked into the heart of creation. *Had they?* After some thought, Chandler and Hartman decided this mystical gnosis was one of LSD’s potential drawbacks, since the patient was generally uninterested in further therapy.

But it was precisely this mystic *gnosis* that interested the psychedelic therapists. Using one large dose and a grab bag of nonverbal cues, after hours of interviewing, testing, analyzing, and prepping, the psychedelic therapist tried to lead the patient to that self-shattering point where he merged with the world—the point known to the Buddhists as *satori*, to the Hindus as *samadhi*, and to the psychological community as “a temporary loss of differentiation of the self and the outer world.” It was a realm of pure potential, and if the psychedelic therapist was skilled, the effects could be dramatic. Osmond and Hoffer’s success rate with chronic alcoholics was hovering between 50 and 70 percent, while Al Hubbard’s clinic at Hollywood Hospital reported a figure in the low eighties.

An update on Mr. Hubbard. Despite the misgivings of Humphrey Osmond, who felt it would create more problems than it would solve,

Hubbard had gotten his Ph.D. in psychology from a Tennessee diploma mill. He was now Dr. Hubbard, at least on his stationery. It may be that in some sense Al felt he needed proof of intellectual parity, poor barefoot boy that he was, surrounded by the likes of Huxley and Heard. Perhaps he coveted their Oxbridge erudition. If so, it was an ironic situation, he longing to discourse intelligently about Jung and the Other World, while they envied him his simple American ability to get things done, whether it was a business deal or a guided tour of the Other World. But whatever Hubbard did, there was always a lot of shrewd practicality to it, and getting his doctorate was no different. Hubbard had decided—I lapse momentarily here into Leary’s transactional terminology—that the one game he wanted to play was the psychedelic research game, with his own clinic, patients, colleagues, and before he could do that he needed credentials.

To be blunt, Hubbard had burned his bridges to pursue LSD; he had let his business interests wither from inattention, which can be stressful for a man with a Rolls Royce-island-estate lifestyle. Despite his genuine human hunger to find out what was happening in the mind’s depths, Hubbard had not been unaware of the possibility that an LSD clinic might prove profitable. What he had needed was a doctor to provide the necessary medical expertise, and he had found him in the person of Ross McLean, the administrator of Hollywood Hospital, in New Westminster, British Columbia. McLean had given Hubbard a suite of rooms and in 1958 the first private Canadian clinic to use LSD therapy opened for business.

Hubbard’s clinic became the testing ground for psychedelic therapy. In 1959 it attracted the attention of Ben Metcalfe, a local reporter. Hubbard invited Metcalfe to stop by for a two-day session, and Metcalfe did. He took the drug in Al’s specially designed session room—Dali’s Last Supper over the couch, Gauguin’s Buddha on the far wall, another Dali, a crucifix, a small altar, a stereo system, burning candles, a statue of the Virgin. Metcalfe landed in a part of the Other World that was comparable to MGM’s film library, particularly the section where historical epics were stored. There were Flashes of Carthage and ancient Rome segueing into landscapes out of Titian; great battles fleetingly glimpsed; figures that were unmistakably Shakespearian. It would have been immensely entertaining had it not ended in a fit of weeping. Not sniffly little whimpers, but great heaving sobs. “This is all repressed material coming out,” Doctor Hubbard said. “This is what we bury to become men.”

It went on like that, with Metcalfe emoting and crying and mumbling to himself, while Al sat meditatively alongside, rarely interrupting. One of the most difficult things that a psychedelic therapist had to learn was how to do nothing, how to become transparent, yet remain attentive enough to respond at the crucial moment, like when Metcalfe began shouting, “I must be insane! I must be.” A good therapist had to know which cue would untie this particular knot. Which picture, which whispered observation. “We’re

all insane when it comes to confronting ourselves,” Al murmured. And there was a big click in Metcalfe’s mind and he went shooting up toward this bright central sun, and as he flew, it seemed to him that his earthly ties, his kids, his wife, his job, all floated away from him like “flashes of multi-colored snow vanishing in the darkness while I sped upwards.”

It felt like death.

“Did I die?” Metcalfe asked.

“No one really dies,” said Captain Al.

Hubbard’s one published work, “The Use of LSD-25 in the Treatment of Alcoholism and Other Psychiatric Problems” (*Quart. J. Stud. Alcohol*, 1961), was frequently cited in the literature, but his biggest contribution was the Hubbard room, the stereo playing Bach, the vaguely spiritual pictures. Although few researchers knew its provenance, duplicates appeared wherever psychedelic therapy gained a foothold.

Though there were some classic psychedelic therapists—Hoffer and Osmond in Saskatchewan come to mind, the Kurland group in Catonsville, Maryland—who used LSD in an almost old-fashioned way, a lot of the psychedelic therapists were new to the profession, either recent graduates or converts like Hubbard and his former protégé, Myron Stolaroff, and this was going to cause problems. In their enthusiasm they returned from the Other World with a childlike energy that was often obnoxious to their middle-aged peers. They cut corners and bruised feelings and this more than anything contributed to the jealousy that lay behind the aura of “bad science” that began to surround LSD therapy.

Myron Stolaroff was a good example. Stolaroff had been in charge of long-range planning at Ampex, one of the first of the big electronics firms to settle south of the Bay Area, when he had been bitten by the psychedelic bug. Together with Hubbard he had tried to interest Ampex’s management in a program that would use LSD to solve all kinds of corporate problems, interpersonal problems, design problems, a long-range planning problems. But the plan had foundered on Al’s penchant for Christian mysticism. Stolaroff didn’t let go, though: he started holding weekly LSD sessions for some of Ampex’s more adventurous engineers; Hubbard came down from Canada one weekend and took them all to a remote cabin in the Sierras where he guided them through the kind of ontological earthquake only Al could manufacture. The senior management of Ampex had been horrified. Having gotten to know Hubbard through rather extraordinary circumstances, it didn’t seem at all irrational for them to be worrying, “What if this nutball drives our best men crazy?” So there had been sighs of relief when Stolaroff decided to leave Ampex and set up his own nonprofit psychedelic research center in Menlo Park, California—the International Foundation for Advanced Study.

The Foundation, which opened in March 1961, wasn’t the only organization working with LSD in the San Francisco area. The Palo

Alto Mental Research Institute had been studying the drug since 1958, and had been instrumental in introducing dozens of local psychiatrists and psychologists, as well as interested laymen like Allen Ginsberg, to the perplexities of the Other World. But the Institute's composure had been shaken by several terrifying incidents—colossal bad trips in which the subject returned from the Other World in questionable shape—and interest in LSD's therapeutic potential had diminished. LSD programs were also under way at the Palo Alto Veterans Hospital, the San Mateo County Hospital, and Napa State Hospital, but no one was offering psychedelic therapy, and what little research was being done was unexciting: Leo Hollister (who will soon reappear in association with a hopeful young writer named Ken Kesey), at the Veterans Hospital, was still doing model psychoses work.

The point was that most LSD researchers were fairly conservative. So when a couple of engineers set up shop (Stolaroff's vice president, Willis Harman, had been an engineering professor at Stanford) and began poaching bread and butter patients—unlike Osmond and Hoffer, Stolaroff wasn't just concentrating on chronic alcoholics, he was soliciting the man off the street, who in this case was the neurotic professional in the high tech-high education hub that surrounded Stanford—there were more than raised eyebrows. Charging five hundred dollars for one session with a highly questionable drug? The whole thing smacked of chicanery, despite the fact that Stolaroff had a licensed psychiatrist running the actual therapy sessions. But what was worse, it was chicanery with good word of mouth. The *San Mateo Call Bulletin*, scenting a medical scandal, had interviewed a number of Stolaroff's patients and found them laudatory to the point of hyperbole. At the Foundation's first and last open house, Stolaroff had been cornered by a disgruntled therapist who growled, "One of my ex-patients thinks you're a saint," making it clear that he thought Stolaroff was a charlatan. What was one to make, after all, of the *Call Bulletin's* statement that the Foundation's aims were "partly medical, partly scientific, partly philosophical, partly mystical"? The first two, okay, but philosophy was for philosophers, and mysticism? mysticism was for cranks!

It was a situation that was a little analogous to Leary's at Harvard, in the sense that the local therapeutic community was so totally absorbed with the pointing finger (questionable professionals using questionable drugs to produce questionable cures) that it was almost as if it didn't want to look at the moon. The Foundation was not reticent about the data it was seeing. Seventy-eight percent of its patients claimed an increased ability to love; 69 percent felt they could handle hostility better, with an equal percentage believing that their ability to communicate with and understand others had improved; 71 percent claimed an increase in self-esteem, and 83 percent returned from the Other World with the conviction that they had brushed against "a higher power, or ultimate reality."

Robert Mogar, the Foundation's expert in such diagnostic tools

as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, had never seen anything that could produce the kind of dramatic changes that LSD routinely produced. Part of the usefulness of the MMPI was the fact that some of its scales were remarkably stable, which provided a background against which other personality changes could be measured. But under LSD these stable scales, which generally pertained to beliefs and values, fluctuated wildly. To augment the MMPI, Stolaroff began using a variant of Oscar Janiger's elaborate card distribution system. This consisted of a hundred statements that the patient arranged in nine piles, ranging from those he agreed with least (pile one) to those he wholeheartedly endorsed (pile nine). Three times the cards were sorted into piles, once at the beginning of the program, two days after the LSD session, and then again in two months' time. The changes were consonant with what other researchers were beginning to report. Cards with statements like, "Although I try not to show it, I really worry quite a bit about whether I will prove adequate in meeting the challenge of life," tended to move down the scale. While those bearing statements like, "I believe that I exist not only in the familiar world of space and time, but also in a realm having a timeless, eternal quality," jumped to the top.

Of course there were some negative reactions. One patient felt he had been harmed mentally and roughly a quarter of the others complained that they now tended to lapse into daydreams with greater frequency. More troubling, but entirely understandable if the data about changes in worldview were correct, was an increase in marital problems—27 percent of the experimental subjects and 16 percent of the paying patients reported increased friction with their spouses.

The Foundation's theoretical manifesto— *The Psychedelic Experience: A New Concept in Psychotherapy* —was submitted for publication in late 1961. In it, the psychedelic experience was broken into three broad stages: (1) evasive maneuvers, (2) symbolic perception, and (3) immediate perception.

The evasive stage, according to the authors, was what earlier therapists had confused with schizophrenia, leading to LSD's misclassification as a psychotomimetic. What happened was this: the drug, by its very nature, released such a flood of new thoughts and perceptions that the patient's normal conceptual framework was overwhelmed, producing a panic condition with overtones of paranoia. But with skillful manipulation of set and setting, the therapist could guide the patient smoothly through the evasive stage to the point where the overly famous hallucinations began. These shifting geometrical patterns were a last gasp of an ego which, "having lost the battle to divert attention through unpleasantness, seeks to charm and distract the conscious mind by throwing up a smokescreen of hallucinations to hide the inner knowledge which it fears."

Actually, the hallucinatory level was a preparation for the realm of symbolic perception, which was where the psycholyticists spent

most of their time, deciphering the curious symbolic patois: "The subject constantly works off repressed material and unreality structures, false concepts, ideas, and attitudes, which have been accumulated through his life experiences. Thus a form of psychological cleansing seems to accompany the subjective imagery. This results in considerable ventilation and release almost independent of intellectual clarification. Gradually the subject comes to see and accept himself, not as an individual with 'good' and 'bad' characteristics, but as one who simply is."

But there was also a higher level still. Past the symbolic stage was a land of no boundaries:

The central perception, apparently of all who penetrate deeply in their explorations, is that behind the apparent multiplicity of things in the world of science and common sense there is a single reality, in speaking of which it seems appropriate to use such words as infinite and eternal .

As Abram Hoffer had told the last Macy Conference, if you could lead a patient to this point, then nine times out of ten a cure would miraculously occur. Why this happened was not easily explained in psychological terms (as Leary had realized when he decided to opt for the rhetoric of applied mysticism). But it seemed to be something like this: overwhelmed by the realization that one was an "imperishable self rather than a destructible ego," the patient underwent a kind of psychic expansion, in which "the many conflicts which are rooted in lack of self acceptance are cut off at the source, and the associated neurotic behavior patterns begin to die away." As the self expanded, it burst the webbing of unhappy relationships that had tethered it to the ground.

Another analogy: Imagine the self as an oxbow lake, which is formed when a meander is cut off from the main body of a shallow, slow-moving river. Over time, unless fresh sources of water are found, the oxbow begins to stagnate, becoming first a marsh, then a swamp, as vegetation (thickets of received ideas, neuroses, etc.) starts to compete for oxygen. Psycholytic therapy, you might say, contented itself with removing the vegetation; psychedelic therapy, on the other hand, operated by dynamiting the obstruction and restoring the oxbow to what, in fact, it had always been: a lazy curve in a broad, flowing river. Both methods achieved the desired result, which was health, but in the second case something totally new (from the perspective of the oxbow world) was created. The psycholytic therapist used LSD to heighten the traditional psychotherapeutic values of recall, abreaction, and emotional release. But the psychedelic therapist was doing something entirely new, and whether he followed Tim Leary and called it applied mysticism, or the psychedelic experience, the integrative experience, or peak experience, it had an unmistakable and unwelcome odor. To discover, in the recesses of the mind, something that felt a lot like God, was not

a situation that either organized science or organized religion wished to contemplate. Yet this was the implication of psychedelic research everywhere, not just at Harvard.

What sprang up was more a climate of criticism than any one specific charge. The profession began to worry. It worried about whether LSD, with its plunge into the deep unconscious, was an appropriate direction for a mental health movement whose *raison d'être* was the molding of healthy, adjusted egos. Could it promote the right sort of behavior change? It worried about the cure rates—Hubbard's 80 percent with chronic alcoholics was unbelievable—which was the start of the bad science criticism, one variant of which went like this: "LSD is a hallucinogen, researchers are taking it as well as giving it, therefore they must be hallucinating their data." That was the charitable bad science interpretation. The uncharitable interpretation maintained that LSD therapists, besides hallucinating their data, were actually making their patients sicker. And they didn't even realize this because the drugs were giving them delusions of grandeur (comparing themselves with the Mercury astronauts or Galileo, what rot!). Psychedelics were revealing a nasty (or a rival) strain of evangelism within the Cinderella science: everywhere you looked therapists were turning into lower-case gurus, with adherents rather than clients.

Roy Grinker put it as bluntly as possible in the *Archives of General Psychiatry*: "Latent psychotics are disintegrating under the influence of even single doses; long-continued LSD experiences are subtly creating a psychopathology. Psychic addiction is being developed."

Grinker cited no data to back up these rather serious charges. He cited no data for the simple reason that there were none—Sidney Cohen's 1960 study on adverse reactions was still unchallenged in the literature. What Grinker was doing was projecting his own professional biases. Believing that your average citizen was a barely functioning tissue of neuroses and incipient psychoses, Grinker found it inconceivable that the opening of the Pandora's box of the unconscious could be anything but disastrous. Whether they knew it or not, people who used LSD had to be disintegrating; Grinker's whole model of consciousness depended upon it. To a traditional psychiatrist like Grinker, consciousness expansion meant unconsciousness expansion, and that was unconscionable.

Actually, a lot of the criticism over LSD can be reduced to a politics of perspective. A psychotomimeticist, for example, watching the ego dissolve under the press of LSD, would jot down "depersonalization," while a Myron Stolaroff or a Tim Leary, faced with the same phenomenon, might record an instance of "mystical union" or "integrative experience." Observing the flights of internal imagery caused by the drugs, the former would choose "hallucination" while the latter might select "visionary or symbolic interaction." As for the emotional highs that followed, the enthusiasm, one could

either choose the psychopathological term, “euphoria,” or go with the new psychedelic candidate, “ecstasy.” When Abraham Maslow, a psychologist far removed from the LSD debate, published his first work on the curative effects of peak experiences (PE), psychedelic therapists like Hoffer quickly appropriated his vocabulary and the debate jumped to a new rhetorical level.

What was happening was basically a turf war over who would control traffic to the Other World. Were mere psychologists, to say nothing of artists, theologians, or an engineer like Myron Stolaroff, competent and responsible enough to investigate the extremes of consciousness, even if it was their own consciousness? Who owned the scientific prospecting rights to the Other World? The medical community claimed it did. According to one *Journal of the American Medical Association* editorial, anything which altered a person’s “mental and emotional equilibrium” was a medical procedure and “should therefore be under medical control.” In other words, LSD and its chemical brethren were part of psychiatry’s weaponry, but not psychology’s. Implicit in all this was the understanding that whoever received the mineral rights to the Other World would also be allowed to define its borders.

Thus it was the theme of “irresponsibility” that rose to the fore in the summer of 1962. LSD “was a useful adjunct to psychotherapy” went the refrain, but unfortunately it attracted “unstable therapists” who derived an “intoxicating sense of power” from bestowing such a fabulous experience on others. And these unstable therapists were the main reason why LSD was escaping, so to speak, from the lab. In July 1962, Sidney Cohen and Keith Ditman, writing in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, drew attention to the phenomenon of the “LSD party”—a phenomenon that the California Narcotics Bureau, when queried by the *LA Times*, knew nothing about. Of course LSD parties had been part of the Los Angeles psychedelic scene since the mid-Fifties, but what was changing was the quality of the participant. A lot of kids were taking LSD, and not just college kids, but the beatnik kids, the maladjusted rebels. To Cohen’s way of thinking, the Beats were exactly the sort of borderline personality types who should be kept away from LSD at all cost. If not, then Grinker’s editorial would become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Besides alerting the medical community to the growing misuse of LSD, Cohen also solicited more examples of adverse reactions. He published his findings in the spring of 1963. Nine incidents were explored, ranging from a psychologist who took LSD three times and then spent the next few weeks contemplating bizarre plots, one of which entailed the seizure of Sandoz’s entire LSD supply, to a secretary for a therapist with a large LSD practice who had taken the drug somewhat more than two hundred times and less than three hundred—she was unsure of the exact figure. What she was sure of was that whenever she looked in a mirror, she saw a skull.

Although adverse reactions were still rare, Cohen predicted that this would change as more therapists added LSD to their practice. The

“inexpert” use of LSD could become a major health hazard, he wrote, and he recommended that use be “restricted to investigators in institutions and hospitals where the patients’ protection is greater and appropriate countermeasures are available in case of adverse reaction.” Projects like Leary’s were precisely what Cohen wanted to see ended.

The debate over who was a responsible therapist and who an irresponsible charlatan became moot when Congress passed a law in the summer of 1962 that gave the FDA control over all new investigational drugs. Scheduled to take effect in June of 1963, the law was principally aimed at the misuse of amphetamines. But the result was that all researchers using experimental drugs would now have to clear their research projects with Washington. No longer would it be possible to mail a form to Sandoz and receive in return LSD or psilocybin.

It was unclear what effect the new regulations would have on LSD research, but a partial answer appeared at Oscar Janiger’s door in the autumn of 1962, in the form of a regional FDA official. Well dressed, polite, he asked to review Janiger’s LSD work. Then he told Janiger to turn over his remaining supply of the drug. Janiger was stunned, then angry. He made some phone calls and learned that others had received similar visits.

Someone was turning off the research machine.

But it was too late to turn off the publicity machine. The psychedelic bookshelf—once limited to Huxley and possibly the Wassons’ massive *Russia, Mushrooms and History*—was expanding in rapid fashion, as Adelle Davis’s *Exploring Inner Space*, Thelma Moss’s *Myself and I*, and Alan Watts’s *The Joyous Cosmology* arrived in the bookshops. All three were anecdotal accounts of the Other World, but the similarity ended there. Adelle Davis, who’d taken LSD as part of Janiger’s creativity study, had been transported to a phantasmagoric land suffused with the aurora borealis of God. “The most lasting value of the drug experience,” she wrote, “appears to be a number of convictions, most of them religious in nature, which are so strong that it makes not one iota of difference whether anyone agrees with them or not.” LSD had led her to “a new faith in God, a faith so satisfying and rewarding that my lasting gratitude goes to the Sandoz Pharmaceutical Laboratories.” Thelma Moss, on the other hand, had spent her sessions harrowing the Freudian Id. The flap copy on her book said it all: “I traveled deep into the buried regions of the Mind. I discovered that in addition to being, consciously, a loving mother and respectable citizen, I was, unconsciously, a murderess, a pervert, a cannibal, a sadist and a masochist.” And then there was Watts’s smooth essay, which Leary and Alpert in the introduction lauded as “the best statement on the subject of space-age mysticism” available. “Watts follows Mr. Huxley’s lead and pushes beyond.”

Watts had a nice poetic feel for what it felt like to travel in the

Other World, which is worth quoting:

Back through the tunnels, through the devious status-and-survival strategy of adult life, through the interminable passes which we remember in dreams... all the streets, the winding pathways between the legs of tables and chairs where one crawled as a child, the tight and bloody exit from the womb, the fountainous surge through the channel of the penis, the timeless wandering through ducts and spongy caverns. Down and back through ever narrowing tubes to the point where the passage itself is the traveler. . . relentlessly back and back through endless and whirling dances to the astronomically proportioned spaces which surround the original nuclei of the world, the centers of centers, as remotely distant on the inside as the nebulae beyond our galaxy on the outside.



NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Barbara Brannon lives in Wilmington, North Carolina. Her contribution for this issue marks a welcome return of her art to this periodical's pages. Cheers, Babs!

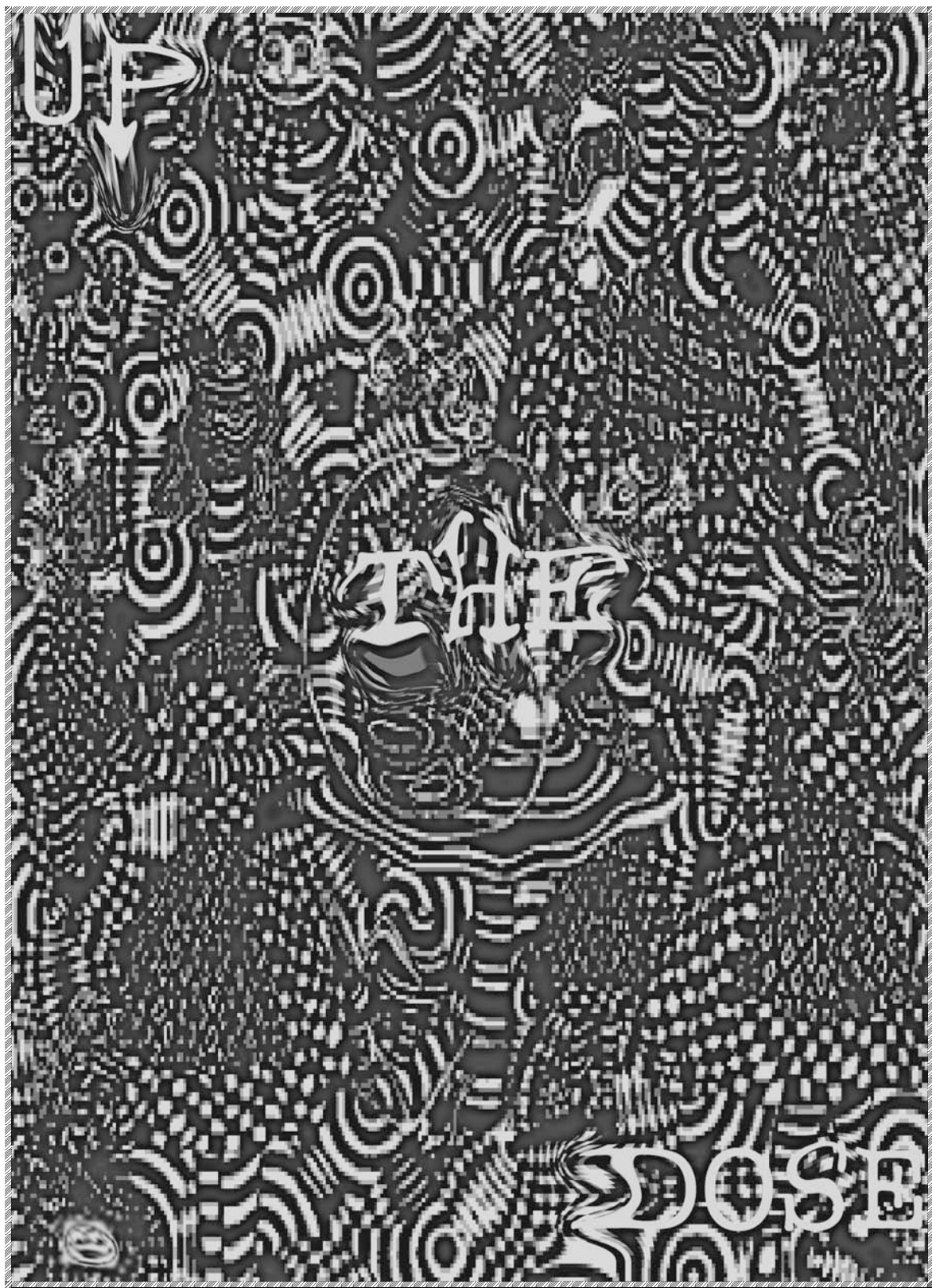
George W. Bush lives in Washington, D.C. But millions of us are working on his quick return to whichever of 25 states he calls currently calls home.

Judih Haggai lives at Kibbutz Nir Oz in Israel. Her poetry has become a regular feature of recent issues of *The Cenacle*, and I intend to keep it that way.

Kassandra Kramer lives in Omaha, Nebraska. Her title, Assistant Editor, does not begin to tell of the ways in which she makes this periodical better, and its Editor happy.

Raymond Soulard, Jr. lives in Plainville, Connecticut. Every day which passes, however, is one closer to him being far west of here . . .

Jay Stevens is the author of *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream* and *Drumming at the Edge of Magic: A Journey into the Spirit of Percussion*, (co-authored with Mickey Hart).



Another *Cenacle* mini-poster brought to you by Soulard & psychedelia . . .

we are



**"No nation could preserve its freedom
in the midst of continual warfare."**

—James Madison, 1795

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